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THE
RED
ISSUE

RED FOR
WORLD
AIDS DAY

RED FOR
WARNING

RED FOR LOVE



EXCLUSIVE
**ZACHARY
QUINTO**

THE WORLD'S MOST
FAMOUS OUT ACTOR
ON LOVE, SEX AND
FINDING HAPPINESS

PLUS
**SPECIAL
REPORT**

**IS THE
PARTY OVER?**

LET'S TALK ABOUT
GAY SEX AND DRUGS



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IT STARTS
WITH
ME





Dr Christian



HOLLYWOOD SUPERSTAR ZACHARY QUINTO

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JEMAL POLSON **ON REPRESENTATION**
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TYLER OAKLEY

THE GAY YOUTUBE SENSATION WITH 2.5 MILLION FOLLOWERS BRANCHES OUT INTO BOOKS AND GIVES US AN EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW

LET'S TALK ABOUT GAY SEX & DRUGS

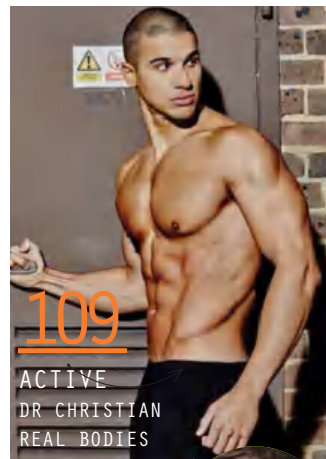
AS THE CONTROVERSIAL *CHEMSEX* FILM IS RELEASED, WE ASK IF THERE'S A DRUGS CRISIS AMONGST SOME GAY/BISEXUAL MEN

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KEEGAN HIRST! VIVIENNE WESTWOOD! YOKO ONO AND MORE! GO BEHIND THE SCENES AT THE MOST GLAMOROUS GAY PARTY OF THE YEAR

ZACHARY QUINTO

A WORLD EXCLUSIVE WITH HOLLYWOOD'S LEADING GAY ACTOR WHO TALKS LOVE, TINSEL TOWN AND THE IMPORTANCE OF MARKING WORLD AIDS DAY



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FAMILY GUYS
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PAUL FLYNN *IS OVER IT*
ICONIC **IT'S A SIN**
LIFE LESSONS
IAIN DALE
TRAVEL **TUSCANY**
PROPERTY
HOW GAY ARE YOU? **COMIC CHRIS RAMSEY**



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Model shown is All-New Renault Kadjar Signature Nav dCi 110.

attitude EDITOR'S LETTER



The vast majority of gay and bisexual men do not use illicit drugs. But over the last decade growing numbers of us have been getting into serious trouble with three relatively new substances: crystal meth, mephedrone and GHB, which is the subject of a documentary film out next month called *Chemsex*.

A few years ago when David Stuart, then working at the only LGBT drugs and alcohol service Antidote (run by London Friend), told me they were seeing growing numbers of men getting into serious trouble, many of them injecting, I thought he was exaggerating. It is understandably hard to accept. Even today lots of people don't believe it. There is aggressive denial from online gay bloggers who have zero experience whatsoever of what is happening (lucky them) but do have very loud, self-important voices. They say they are combatting hysteria and have criticised David Stuart, now at sexual health clinic 56 Dean St (the subject of the *Chemsex* film), who has brought this issue to the fore, accusing him of trying to create a job for himself. They have criticised plays about the subject and the media – mainstream and gay – accusing us of sensationalising the issue. But reporting is not the same as sensationalising. *The Guardian* and *Independent* have been calm, sober and non-judgmental. In fact, the only hysteria I've seen comes from those denying there is a problem. They have discussed 'chemsex' far more than anyone else in the media.

But they are in denial about a real and serious problem, which is touching, more and more of us in negative ways that I have not seen in my twenty years working at *Attitude*. In recent years I've seen several friends put out pleas to find missing friends whose drug use has made them suicidal. I've had people come to me seeking help for friends who have lost relationships or jobs because of drug use. I have one friend who left London to escape the problem only to find the chemsex scene was thriving on apps in the small town he relocated to. Earlier this year he became HIV-positive after one of the many encounters where he was injecting crystal meth. Another friend found himself in a crystal meth induced psychosis knocking on strangers' doors on a south London street begging to be let in because

he believed the police were following him.

These are people that I have known for years. Word of mouth reports of deaths as a result of overdosing amongst friends of friends are not uncommon, usually not getting much attention because families find it too distressing to publically acknowledge.

Again, we are not being judgmental. This affects a minority of men but still a significant number. If I was ten years younger there's a strong chance I would have tried these drugs. The difference is that these three are not like the ecstasy and speed that my generation grew up with, where we danced and hugged each other for hours; they are far more powerful, addictive and dangerous. It may be possible that some people use them without losing some control but I don't know many of those. Sorry if it's not cool to say so, but it is the truth.

For this feature we didn't ask for men with shocking stories; just for people with experience of drug use who wanted to talk about it. But their stories are shocking. They are frightening. They reflect what I see amongst people I know. This is a real and serious problem and we need to talk about it, without judgment. We need to understand why this is happening and let people know that there is help if you want to cut down or stop your drug use.

In the lead up to World AIDS Day we will be publishing people's stories of what is happening and also how to get out of it, if that's what you want, at attitude.co.uk.

I also want to ask you if you are a friend or family member of someone who has died from drug use, or if you want to anonymously share your story, please get in contact with me at matthew.todd@attitude.co.uk. We cannot afford to bury our heads in the sand any longer.

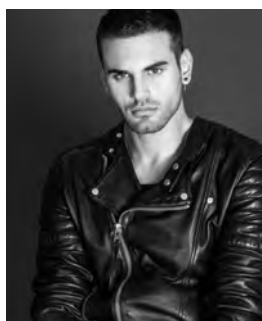
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THE UK'S BEST-SELLING GAY MAGAZINE
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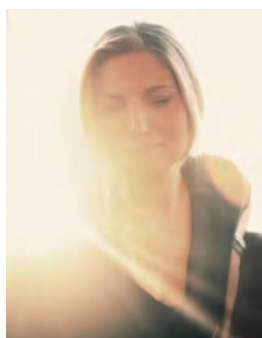
PATRICK CASH

Patrick Cash is a writer and performer of spoken word poetry. He runs the night Spoken Word London and the gay men's wellbeing forum Let's Talk About Gay Sex & Drugs, in partnership with 56 Dean Street. He's thrilled to become a contributing editor to *Attitude* in this issue, as well as writing the lead feature on gay men's chemsex. He also writes for the theatre, and his new show *Queers* is currently showing at the King's Head Theatre, Angel, London.



LEONARDO CORREDOR

Leonardo is an ex-model, based in New York, who is now a professional photographer (though he once modelled for *Attitude* magazine way back in the day). He has shot for magazines such as *Vogue*, *Schön!* and *Flaunt* magazine. He photographed our stories in Los Angeles last year, and in this issue he has photographed our main fashion, that's all about dancers and the colour red.



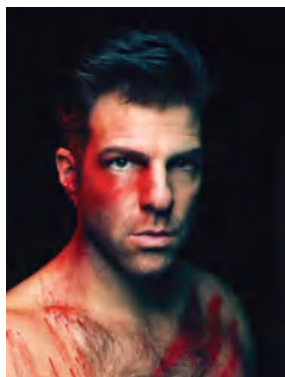
VICTORIA WILL

Victoria is a New York based photographer who has shot the likes of Leonardo DiCaprio, Brad Pitt and Ryan Reynolds, so we knew that our cover star, Zachary Quinto, would be in great hands with her. Victoria has worked for a plethora of publications, such as *W* magazine, *Vogue*, *Esquire* and *Elle* to name but a few. She lives in New York City with her photojournalist husband, their son, and their two French Bulldogs.

ON THE COVERS



ZACHARY WEARS TOP BY A.P.C. AT MR PORTER



ZACHARY QUINTO

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WHICH STAR WARS CHARACTER ARE YOU?



RYAN

R2-D2, because he's quietly confident.



ELENA

Jar Jar Binks because I love his ears and how he speaks.



CHARLIE

Queen Amidala. She has amazing outfits in every scene.



ELEANOR

Han Solo when he's cryogenically frozen. My reason? I don't need one!



OYSTEIN

R2-D2. He's the perfect friend, always there, but my personality is probably more C-3PO.



JOHN

I'd be Obi-Wan Kenobi because he's just a likeable character, the cool guy everyone wants to be with.

WHAT David Hoyle presents Future Perfect
WHERE The Vauxhall Tavern, London
WHEN 15th October

THE WORD ON THE STREET...



DANIEL

I've only seen the first *Star Wars* movie and I can't remember it. Sorry!



MATT

Jabba the Hutt. He has a big palace, servants and a luxurious life. He just does what he wants!



NIALL

Princess Leia because she's hot!



CHELSEA

Princess Leia when she's chained to a fat beast in a gold bikini.



JASON

Princess Leia because I'm like her. You'll have to ask my boyfriend if you want to know more. I want the hairstyle though!



DOMINIC

Boba Fett because of his fighting skills

spare me
the guilt chip.



all the flavour. half the fat.



FILM / TV / MUSIC
OPINION / NEWS
PERFORMANCE
BOOKS / BOYS

THIS

CREDIT: TERN PEGGLEY

MEET THE BREAKOUT STAR OF TRANS HIT *TANGERINE* PG37>>



THE THINGS WE LOVE THIS MONTH

WORDS: JOSEPH KOCHARIAN AND BEN KELLY

LIST

QUEERS

A new play from 'The Clinic' writer Patrick Cash fully explores the diverse stories of the modern LGBT community in London.

KING'S HEAD THEATRE
LONDON, 31 OCT – 22 NOV.
KINGSHHEADTHEATREPUB.CO.UK



4 FESTIVAL

BEING A MAN

Now in its second year, this festival looks at what it means to be a man in modern society. Marking International Men's Day, the weekend will see up to 150 speakers involved in various talks, debates, concerts, performances and workshops. Among those involved include Kellie Maloney, our friends at Polari, columnists like Christian Jessen, Wayne Dbesi and Jemal Polson, as well as Attitude's own Matthew Todd and Cliff Joannou.

27-29 NOV, SOUTHBANK CENTRE, LONDON. SOUTHBANKCENTRE.CO.UK/BAM



MOVEMBER

River Island are once again supporting global charity and men's health foundation Movember by coming on board as a clothing partner. Last year it was shirts, and this year they have released three knitwear pieces: a crewneck in stone, a shawl cardigan that comes in khaki and navy, and a polo neck in plum and silver. 30% of all profits will be donated to the Movember foundation. It's available online and from selected stores. RIVERISLAND.COM

a STAR

Dangerous Games

Alright, so Mr Flatley himself may not be dusting off his heavy shoes for this new Irish dancing spectacle, but this fleet of fancy fellas who make up the cast of *Dangerous Games* – the latest *Lord of the Dance* instalment – should be more than enough to still keep you entertained. Just take a look at dreamy cast member Cathal Keaney (pictured). Talk about Irish charm!

Lord of the Dance: Dangerous Games plays at the Playhouse Theatre London through January 2016. Lordofthedance.com



↓ INTERVIEW

MARGARET CHO

The controversial American comic has long been a vocal champion within the LGBT rights movement, and in December she brings her Psycho Tour to London. She chatted to *Attitude* about the craziness in her life right now.

ON GUN CONTROL

IT'S SOMETHING WE HAVE TO MAKE FUN OF BECAUSE PEOPLE ARE DYING! I MEAN AMY SCHUMER ESPECIALLY; PEOPLE WERE SHOT AT HER SHOWS! THERE'S NO WAY TO GO TOO FAR. WE REALLY HAVE TO USE THE COMEDY THAT WE KNOW WE CAN DO, TO TRY TO FIX THINGS, TO TRY TO HELP. WHY NOT ATTACK EACH OTHER WITH ART AND HUMOUR INSTEAD OF VIOLENCE AND KILLING?

ON OFFICIATING GAY WEDDINGS

I STARTED DOING THEM IN SAN FRANCISCO WHEN GAVIN NEWSOM, THE MAYOR OF SAN FRANCISCO BROKE THE LAW AND STARTED MARRYING GAY COUPLES AT CITY HALL, AND I WAS DEPUTISED DURING THAT PERIOD. I CAN DO THIS ALL OVER THE WORLD. I HAVE AN ONLINE MINISTRY WHICH MEANS I CAN DO IT IN ANY CIVIC BUILDING. I'M LIKE KIM DAVIS EXCEPT I ACTUALLY DO MY JOB.

ON HER MENTOR JOAN RIVERS

COMEDY IS AN ART FORM THAT PREACHES MENTORSHIP, SO WHEN YOU LOSE YOUR MENTOR YOU HAVE TO STEP UP AND BECOME A MENTOR. I'VE BEEN SPENDING THE LAST YEAR TRYING TO FIGURE OUT HOW TO DO THAT.

ON TAKING A JOKE TOO FAR

I DO IT ALL THE TIME! I TRY TO DO IT AT LEAST FOUR OR FIVE TIMES A NIGHT. I WANT TO TALK ABOUT REAL SUFFERING AND REAL PAIN. WITH COMEDY I TRY TO CUT IT WITH A PUNCH LINE, EVERY TIME. I DO OFFEND PEOPLE BUT



OFFENDING PEOPLE IN A WAY THAT'S NOT AT THE EXPENSE OF ANYONE BUT MY OWN SELF AND MY OWN EXPERIENCES. TO SPEAK OF IT MAKES YOU SMARTER.

ON UK AUDIENCES

THEY'RE DIFFERENT. YOU KNOW IT'S A MUCH MORE INTELLIGENT CROWD BECAUSE THE UK DOESN'T TALK DOWN TO PEOPLE. YOU KNOW THEY

KIND OF REACH FOR THE HIGHEST PLACE THEY CAN GO IN TERMS OF PROGRESS, SO YOU CAN RATCHET IT UP IF YOU'RE A SMART COMIC. THAT'S WHY I THINK MOST AMERICAN COMICS DON'T REALLY MOVE HERE!

MARGARET CHO PLAYS AT THE LEICESTER SQUARE THEATRE, LONDON FROM 16-20 DEC. MARGARETCHO.COM

WORDS: BEN KELLY

↓ EVENT

PTF EQUALITY BALL

This fundraiser for the human rights work of the Peter Tatchell Foundation will see performances from Marc Almond and Heatber Peace, with Sir Ian McKellen the honoured guest. Tickets are available at £50 per person. 28 Nov, The Old Town Hall, Stratford, London.

TINYURL.COM/EQUALITYBALL2015



↓ FESTIVAL

OUTBURST QUEER ARTS FESTIVAL

This festival enjoys its ninth year, taking place in multiple arts venues around Belfast, and includes the premiere of local writer Stacey Gregg's play Scorch, about a gender questioning teen's first love, and Dry Your Eyes Princess, an exhibition by photographer Stephen King, which offers a queer reflection of The Troubles. 12-21 Nov, Belfast.

OUTBURSTARTS.COM

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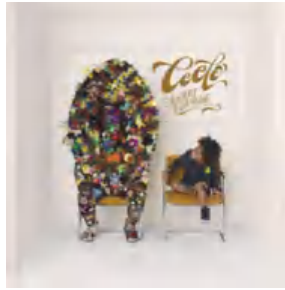
EXCLUSIVELY AVAILABLE AT christopherward.co.uk

**8/10****LITTLE MIX****GET WEIRD/SYCO**

Get Weird is the third studio album from Britain's premiere girl band, with a thoroughly American production effort shining through from the stand out first single *Black Magic*. The follow up single *Love Me Like You* is another hit, with throw back Motown vibes reminiscent of Stooshe's *Black Heart*.

Their four voices are all equally as strong and soulful – as evidenced recently on a brilliant Live Lounge mash up of Jason Derulo's *Want To Want Me* and Whitney Houston's *I Wanna Dance With Somebody*. Derulo himself turns up as a guest vocalist on *Secret Love Song*, the album's strongest ballad. Most tracks though, are bangers, with thumping retro beats, like the 1980s feel of *Weird People*, and tight harmonies are on offer from all the girls in most songs. Writing credits come thick and fast on *Get Weird*, including from pop stars in their own right John Newman and Jess Glynne, who contributes to the empowerment anthem *Grown*.

With their imagery, and their tabloid presence, Little Mix can sometimes come across as something of a youth act (they are all still under 25), but the accessibility of their continued string of pop hits is undeniable, and they know how to go out and nail a single like few other groups working in the industry today. **BK**

**5/10****CEELO GREEN****HEART BLANCHE/WARNER**

CeeLo Green is an odd pop star. He isn't someone you'd pick out of a crowd as a chart topping superstar, but with a track record that includes *Crazy* and *Forget You*, he does have a knack for reappearing every couple of years with a readymade pop classic. Sadly there is no such tune on *Heart Blanche*.

What we have here is quite a coherent, enjoyable album in his usual retro flavoured urban sound. We do get good hooks on *Est. 1980s*, where he shouts out to musicians like Culture Club, Billy Idol, and in *Working Class Heroes (Work)*, but they're not enough to make successful singles. *Tonight* sounds like a Bonnie Tyler remix, and things relax a little for *Robin Williams* – a sweet, if not a little odd tribute to the late comic, which also laments the loss of Philip Seymour Hoffman and Richard Pryor. One of the best tracks is the self explanatory titled *CeeLo Green Sings The Blues*, which is somewhere between Percy Sledge and Aretha Franklin.

Altogether it feels a little samey for CeeLo, and yet there isn't the icing on the cake hit we've come to expect from him. Plus, at 15 tracks, it all outstays its welcome. His voice is remarkable, and he's an undeniable talent, but sadly it hasn't really paid off on this effort. **BK**

**7/10****AMY: THE ORIGINAL SOUNDTRACK****VARIOUS/ISLAND**

The *Amy* documentary was one of the most talked about music movies of the year, and is now officially the highest grossing British documentary of all time. On the official soundtrack, there are original Amy tracks as well as live performances, all sprinkled with Antonio Pinto's original scoring which complements her music. **BK**

**7/10****ERASURE****ALWAYS: THE VERY BEST OF/MUTE-BMG**

This three disc box set is a must have for the Christmas stocking of any fan of Erasure, celebrating 30 years since their breakout in 1987 with sophomore album *The Circus*. Full of tracks like *A Little Respect*, *Ship Of Fools* and *Victim Of Love*, it also has music from their ABBA-esque EP, more recent efforts, and various remixes of the classics. **BK**

SOUNDTRACK OF MY LIFE: PETE WATERMAN

Pete Waterman is a celebrated British music producer and songwriter. He's responsible for some of the biggest UK hits scoring twenty-two number one singles with

acts like Steps and Kylie Minogue. **The first record you ever bought.**

Deadwood by Doris Day – any song that has the lyrics “arrows thicker than porcupine quills” you just have to love. I was a massive fan of Doris Day when I was young.

What's the song that makes you proud?

Never Gonna Give You Up, by Rick Astley. We wrote that in the car with Rick and it became

our biggest hit. I hear it's been covered by a rock band in the mid west poking fun at the people who are anti-same-sex marriage.

Is there any song that makes you cringe?

I can't say that. There's no song that I look back on and think – oh, that's horrible, because you're actually responsible for them.

What song do you wish you'd written?

Imagine by John Lennon. I love the melody and I love the sentiment. Great lyrics. The same for *Locomotion*. That song was one of my all time faves and I only produced Kylie's version because she had done it already and we were asked to rework it and we made it sound totally different.

The best album you worked on.

Donna Summer's *Another Place and Time*. It was brilliant working with her. We did it in two weeks and she was so full of energy and ideas. I would say that this album is the epitome of the 80s hi-NRG sound.

What's your most surprising bit?

Kylie's *Turn It Into Love* is one of our biggest hits ever. Even though it was a B-side on Kylie's self-titled debut album, it had a life of its own. The song is amazing and is going to be featured on a new album of mine which slows it down.

Say I'm Your Number One: The Stock Aitken Waterman Singles box set is out now pwl-empire.com





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5/5

THE QUEEN OF IRELAND

RORY O'NEILL

Director Conor Horgan has spent a couple of years following the day to day life of Ireland's premier drag queen Panti Bliss, as well as delving into the life of Rory O'Neill, the man who plays her. Alongside wacky stage antics, there are touching interviews with O'Neill's mother and father, and discussions about homophobia and HIV. It's set against a backdrop of Ireland's history of intolerance where homosexuality is concerned, but culminates gloriously in the equal marriage referendum which signalled a new country. All the while, Panti is hilarious and inspirational; a perfect snapshot of a very modern national treasure. **BK**

Nov 16th



3/5

THE DRESSMAKER

KATE WINSLET, JUDY DAVIS, CHRIS HEMSWORTH

Talented luxury dressmaker Tilly Dunnage (Winslet) returns home to her barely capable mother (Davis) in the tiny middle-of-nowhere town of Dungatar, Australia, where she is made to face the ghosts of her past. *The Dressmaker* never really commits to any kind of genre, as it jumps from one segment to another. But although it is a tad rough around the edges, you do eventually warm to its whimsical charm, by in large thanks to a magnetic performance from its captivating lead. **JP**

20th Nov



3/5

THE LADY IN THE VAN

MAGGIE SMITH, ALEX JENNINGS

This comedy drama, adapted from the Olivier-nominated play, is the true story of the relationship between playwright Alan Bennett (Jennings) and the remarkable Miss Shepherd (Smith), a woman of uncertain origins who 'temporarily' parked her van in Bennett's London driveway and proceeded to live there for 15 years. Bennett's screenplay is, as always, absolutely charming, and whether it was entirely necessary or not, the cinematic elevation works well here. Jennings is perfect casting for Bennett and Smith, while treading similar territory, gives a charismatic and enjoyable performance. **JP**

13th Nov



5/5

CAROL

CATE BLANCHETT, SARAH PAULSON, ROONEY MARA

In possibly the most compelling romance of the year, 1950s department store clerk Therese (Mara) falls for older, wealthy married woman Carol (Blanchett). This shouldn't simply be celebrated for being a mainstream release about sexuality and the oppressions of society, but it also says a huge amount about friendship, class, family and love. This adaptation of Patricia Highsmith's novel is so rich in its storytelling and so intricate in detail, that it makes for a truly intoxicating watch. Mara is fascinating as Therese, giving an understated and focused performance, while Blanchett is so fabulously damaged as Carol. She could easily be reaching for her third Oscar. **JP**

27th Nov

STEVE JOBS

MICHAEL FASSBENDER, KATE WINSLET, SETH ROGEN

4/5

Set backstage at three product launches between 1984 and 1998, ending with the unveiling of the iconic iMac, Michael Fassbender takes on the role of Steve Jobs. We go behind the scenes of the digital revolution, giving us a closer portrait of the complex but remarkable man who made such a mark on society. This is not your typical overly-American biopic. It avoids being patronising, possibly thanks to British director Danny Boyle and its two talented leads. The film has an unexpectedly cynical exterior and Jobs is often portrayed as an imperfect, sometimes malicious man, in this fast paced and intense character study. **JP**

13th Nov



★★★★ "RIVETING, UNSENTIMENTAL...
a very strong piece of journalistic documentary"

Little White Lies

C H E M S E X

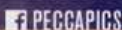
★★★★ "NECESSARY... this film is a wakeup call"

Attitude Magazine

VICE PRESENT CHEMSEX

DIRECTED BY WILLIAM FAIRMAN MAX GOGARTY PRODUCED BY MAX GOGARTY WILLIAM FAIRMAN AL BROWN EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS AL BROWN KEVIN SUTCLIFFE JACQUELINE EDENBROW
CINEMATOGRAPHY BENJIE CROCE WILLIAM FAIRMAN MAX GOGARTY EDITED BY MARTA VELASQUEZ GRAHAM TAYLOR ORIGINAL SCORE BY DANIEL HARLE

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Q&A

FLEUR EAST

THIS TIME LAST YEAR, POP HOPEFUL FLEUR EAST CAPTURED EVERYONE'S ATTENTION WHEN SHE PERFORMED BRUNO MARS' *UPTOWN FUNK*. NOW A YEAR ON, THE LONDONER WITH THE MASSIVE 'FRO HAS A STOMPING OLD SKOOL ANTHEM OF HER OWN AND A NEW ALBUM TO BOOT.

'Sax' has been a long time coming. You must be fit to burst with excitement?

I am so excited about this song coming out. I have had to sit on it for so long and only played it to my family and friends a week before it came out. I am so excited. It's really old skool with a modern twist. When my mum heard it she said to me that it kind of sounded like the music she grew up listening to. The whole album has that vibe.

Of course, it was your cover of 'Uptown Funk' that saw people take notice.

I know a lot of people in this country heard my version before the single came out, so they really associate it with me. And I'm proud of that, cos the song is amazing.

Did you ever meet Bruno Mars or Mark Ronson to find out their thoughts?

I haven't met Bruno yet, but I met Mark at the BRITS and he told me he really liked my performance and that he owed me a cup of tea.

More like a collaboration!

Yes, definitely! I would love to work with Mark at some point. Mark, you know where I am!

Female stars are really ruling the music world right now.

Yes, the girls are running the show. I mean just look at Taylor Swift, there is no stopping her. She is incredibly successful. And she deserves it. She's so talented. It's great that are so many strong women in the music industry right now.

She's very squeaky clean though, especially when you compare to her to other female artists, right?

Maybe, but I've loved Taylor for ages. Over the past couple of years she has just gone massive. She does pop but it's edgy, and I think that's why people like her so much. Her music is great, but

“
THE GIRLS ARE
RUNNING THE
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HER

FLEUR EAST'S NEW
SINGLE 'SAX'
IS OUT NOW. HER
DEBUT ALBUM IS
EXPECTED BY THE
END OF THE YEAR



she's also a really nice, funny person. And she seems to really look out for her fans. I think that's why there is so much love for her.

And she's able to get massive stars to join her on tour. Who would you have on stage with you – living or dead?

I would love Michael Jackson to join me. And Janet. And I would love to duet with Alicia Keys. And I would love Kanye West, just so we can call ourselves EastWest!

Everyone wants to be in Taylor's squad. Do you?

A massive yes! She has a great bunch of friends and she clearly loves Brits.

Every pop star has dated bunky Calvin Harris... Rita Ora, Taylor. Is he on your romantic radar?

Err, not for me. I don't really want to go out with a guy who's been out with so many people.

If you were to become a pop power couple who would be your other half?

I don't really know to be honest! I go for personality, so it could be anyone

once I get to know them. I quite like Justin Bieber. He looks nice.

X Factor won Attitude's Media Recognition Award last month. Do you think the show represents gay culture well?

From what I can see it has. You've had so many gay people on the show who are open, which proves we have come a long way. There was a time when it wasn't easy for people taking part in shows like that to be out and open, but that's changed. I love Rylan, and look at this year's show – you have the amazing Seann Miley Moore.

Well, gay men already love you.

I've performed at G-A-Y before and the reaction was so good. The guys really seemed to enjoy themselves.

You've got such a great barnet, have you met any drag queens?

No, but I would love my fans to dress in drag. People keep telling me to watch *RuPaul's Drag Race*. If I was a drag queen version of me I'd call myself Goldilocks.

WORDS: CHRISTIAN GUILTENANE

ZACHARY QUINTO

Nice ears!

GUS KENWORTHY

The athlete who came out as A HOMOSEXUAL (screams, faints, can you believe it, an actual gay). Please marry us. **OBVIOUSLY.**

CHRISTINE IN EASTENDERS

It's literally **ALL ABOUT CHRISTINE.** We love you and we'd like to be your friend, Christine. (Let me see her, let me see her, be my guest siiiiiir)

STAR WARS

We're hoping they are opening a special Queer Ewoks bar where everyone eats sweets and rubs their furry bellies together while squeaking to Cher

CHER THE MUSICAL

We can't. We just. Just, yes.

COLTON HAYNES

Dressed as the Witch from Little Mermaid for Halloween. **AS YOU DO.**

CRAIG REVEL HORWOOD

Divine/disaster darling!

**GERMAINE GREER**Like, do you have to be so **RUDE?****DONALD TRUMP**

Like, do you have to be such a **THREAT TO ALL HUMANITY?** Ffs, *STOMPS*

X FACTOR

Meh. Though we do like the one in the dress.

A HOCUS POCUS SEQUEL

Delayed apparently. Bette Midler keeps rightly banging on about it. Frankly, we think **IT IS THE BEST IDEA SINCE THE INVENTION OF CHEESE**

MARC JACOBS ON GRINDR

Sister, we love you but the yellow/black colors of the devil will come for us all in the end. Save yourself before it's too late! *Through loud hailer*: Step away from the iPhone...

CHRISTMAS

It's getting nearer. That time of year when everyone is 'happy'. **OH. JOY.**

THE COLDInside and out. **HIYYYYYYYY!**

Joe Stone

IS ON IT

twitter @Joe_Stone_**MYTHBUSTERS: DEBUNKING 'GAY VOICE'**

DO I SOUND GAY? The obvious answer is, yes, very. So gay in fact that well-meaning callers frequently mistake me for a woman, earning me the nickname 'Mrs Stone' at one magazine where I worked. So gay that I basically haven't had to bother coming out at any point in the last decade, which is time-saving if nothing else. As a teenager, I sounded effeminate enough that if I answered the house phone to my sister's boyfriend we could go a good five minutes before he realised I wasn't her, something which I exploited to maximum blackmailing effect (obviously). So the answer is yes, I definitely do sound gay.

The question is the title of a recent documentary, in which journalist David Thorpe attempts to get to the bottom of his own discomfort at having a faggy voice. He talks with similarly-voiced friends about their own insecurities, visits a voice coach and learns what factors influence how gay or straight we sound (apparently gay men lisping is a myth, but we do like to over-enunciate our 'S' sounds. The other tell-tale signs are apparently longer and clearer vowels; more pronounced Ls and over-articulated Ps Ts and Ks.)

The film posits several reasons for why some gay men have developed our own 'accent', and touches on internalised homophobia, code-switching and group identity. One expert suggests that some boys simply adopt speech codes from women rather than men. And the phenomenon isn't restricted to gay men; a case study is used of a gay-sounding straight man who grew up on an ashram surrounded by women, as well as a butch sounding gay man who spent his childhood with four jock brothers. These

examples support the theory that 'gay voice' doesn't even exist; a recent study found that listeners could only correctly identify a gay man's voice 60% of the time, which pretty much falls within the margins of luck.

The documentary raises many interesting points (have you ever noticed how so many Disney villains – from Captain Hook to Shere Khan and Jafar – sound like different versions of the same Nelly?), but the subject of gay voice provokes similar feelings in me to the hot topic of a supposed gay gene. I totally get that people are interested in how flammers are produced, but sometimes I worry that the reason isn't so that they can create more of us. Trying to isolate whatever nature/ nurture makes people gay implies that gayness is a problem which needs to be solved, when surely we'd be better off focusing on weeding out the gene that makes people buy Crocs, or eat boiled eggs on public transport.

When it comes to being or sounding gay, to paraphrase Lady Gaga, maybe we were born this way. Maybe it's because we ate too many pink Smarties during our childhood, or idolised Ursula the sea witch more than was strictly healthy (guilty). I don't actually care either way. While it's interesting to reflect on the why and wherefores, I think the greater use of gay men's energy would be spent accepting who we are rather than questioning how we got this way. While my own voice would no doubt horrify a busload of football hooligans, I'm totally at peace with that. And if the cost of being myself is occasionally being mistaken for a woman on the phone, bring it on. Hopefully a lucrative career in fraud awaits. When all is said (lisped) and done: some people sound gay. Get over it.

“
APPARENTLY GAY
MEN LISPING
IS A MYTH, BUT
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SPECTACLES

SUE PERKINS/MICHAEL JOSEPH

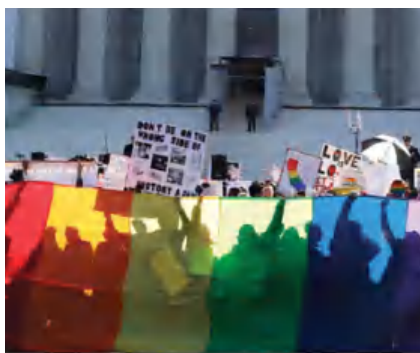
They say you shouldn't judge a book by its cover (metaphorically), but the lovely design on the front of Sue Perkins' autobiography *Spectacles* makes a beautiful starting point for this typically dry, witty run through her life.

You might wonder what Sue is without comedy partner Mel Giedroyc, or indeed if she really warrants almost 400 pages of memoir, and yes, perhaps it is a tad long, but as with any book from a comedian, it is an entertaining read regardless of how much the reader really cares for the subject.

She details how she met Mel, the madcap misadventures of their early years doing the Edinburgh Fringe, through to their daytime TV show, and on to *The Great British Bake Off*. We also learn a little of their behind the scenes friendship, which is just as affectionate as you might imagine from the outside. She writes a great deal about family, her relationships (including a first love who

turned out to be gay himself), and the strong bond she has with her pets. Her five page posthumous letter to her beagle Pickle is one of the most touching things I've read this year. "I have said I love you to many people over many years: friends, family, lovers," she writes, "but my love for you was different. It filled those spaces that words can't reach." Reader, I wept.

Among this are anecdotes as wide ranging as Perkins repeatedly explaining her lesbianism to a senile grandmother, being threatened by Sarah Palin's husband, and discovering that she has a brain tumour. In many ways, Perkins is a sort of anti-celebrity; her stories are those of a slightly awkward person who just happens to be thrown into slightly glitzy surrounds every now and again. It's what millions of viewers have found endearing, and any reader of *Spectacles* will feel the same.



THE GAY REVOLUTION

LILLIAN FADERMAN/SIMON & SCHUSTER

The history of the gay rights struggle in the U.S. is a fascinating journey, and in *The Gay Revolution: The Story of the Struggle*, renowned lesbian scholar Lillian Faderman does it terrific justice. She begins in the 1940s, and explores scandals in the era of Roosevelt and witch hunts in the 1950s, when homosexuality remained illegal and a classified mental illness. She then divides the book up into ten clear sections, covering early revolts and Harvey Milk, Stonewall and gay liberation, the arrival of AIDS and 'Don't Ask Don't Tell', to the push towards full equality in the 21st century.

Each section has several mini sections which detail events like the preface to the Stonewall riots, or the first time President Reagan's press secretary spoke about AIDS in 1982 ("I don't know anything about it," he said). Faderman doesn't give President Clinton a hard time over DADT, but sets out how his good intentions were marred once he

was elected in 1992 and passed the bill, though she does discuss President Obama's 'evolution' on gay rights frankly, something which is very much a recurring theme for candidates in the current U.S. Presidential election.

But this is not a book about presidents, it is a book about a people, and it is littered with the trials and tribulations of everyday LGBT Americans from the past half century, whose stories have been expertly researched by Faderman, and woven into the overall arc of our community's struggle, and society's progression. This book doesn't cover the gay rights movement outside of the U.S. (as much as the British experience could warrant its own volume) but nevertheless, this is a history which belongs to us all, and is the kind of volume every LGBT person should have on the shelf.



ED BURSTELL

FROM REHAB TO THE FRONT ROW/
MICHAEL O'MARA BOOKS

Today, Ed Burstell is the MD of Liberty, one of the most iconic institutions in London, but he's come a long way from surviving heroin addiction in 80s New York. He writes, "I am only fifty-six, but I feel like I've lived three or four different lives already." In many ways, his story is representative of the troubled history many gay men of his generation have experienced. But, equally, he matches adversity with self-reliance and determination, and describes how he went from being a spritzer at Macy's to holding one of the top jobs in UK retail. *From Rehab to the Front Row* is a short, but inspirational read.

ICONS THROUGH A LENS



KATE: INSIDE THE RAINBOW
JOHN CARDER BUSH

Bush's brother John has been photographing her since childhood and that life long relationship is captured here with never before seen shots and two essays in which he describes their shared childhood.



TWO DAYS THAT ROCKED THE
WORLD: ELTON JOHN LIVE AT
DODGER STADIUM TERRY O'NEILL

Elton's legendary shows at Dodger Stadium saw him play to 110,000 people in his iconic bejewelled baseball costume. This book features 150 of Terry O'Neill's photos of the day and a foreword from Billie Jean King.



JAMES DEAN DENNIS STOCK

For the last year of his life, photographer Dennis Stock followed the short lived screen idol James Dean and took most of the iconic black and white photographs we have of him. This reprint should be on every coffee table.



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THE RULES: WEARING CONDOMS



IF YOU'RE GOING TO HAVE SEX, YOU SHOULD WEAR A CONDOM.

2



OH, YOU'RE TOO BIG? THEY HAVE BIGGER ONES, YOU POOR, AFFLICTED PERSON.

3



OH, YOU'RE ALLERGIC TO LATEX? THEY HAVE NON-LATEX ONES!

8



ONLY USE A WATER-BASED LUBRICANT.

9



YOU GET THE PICTURE: WRAP IT UP!

4



OH, YOU LIKE THEM BANANA FLAVOURED? YEAH THEY HAVE THOSE TOO...

7



OH, AND HOLD THE TIP WHEN YOU'RE PUTTING THEM ON.

6



OH, YOU DON'T LIKE THE WAY THEY FEEL? TRY GONORRHOEA. DOESN'T FEEL GREAT.

5



OH, YOU DON'T HAVE ANY MONEY? YOU CAN GET THEM FOR FREE!

WORDS: BEN KELLY



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TOP TV this month

■ TERRESTRIAL: **FARGO**

This black comedy TV version of the Coen brothers' movie returns for a second series to Channel 4 in November, complete with an all star cast including Kirsten Dunst and Ted Danson. Also look out for a guest appearance from Ronald Reagan (not playing himself).



■ TERRESTRIAL: **THE BRIDGE**

The Swedish-Danish crime drama is on to its third series, which will hit BBC Four in November. While the first series centered on a murder mystery involving the two Nordic countries, the second made some eco-terrorists the bad guys. Who knows what's in store this time.



■ ONLINE: **HOW GAY IS PAKISTAN?**

Hotly debated following its screening on BBC Three last month, Mawaan Rizwan's documentary about what it's like to be gay in the country of his birth is a must watch on iPlayer. The life he discovers many LGBT Pakistanis living is saddening, but he finds it goes on behind closed doors more than you might think.
bbc.co.uk/bbcthree



■ BOX SET: **DOWNTON ABBEY SERIES 1-6**

All good things must come to an end, and after the current season finishes on ITV, *Downton Abbey* will finally shut its doors. Will Maggie Smith die? Will it end in a dramatic shoot out? Who knows. But you can own absolutely all of it on DVD come 16th November.



Jemal Polson

twitter @JemalPolson



IDENTITY AND DIVERSITY

THERE SEEM TO be many people who discount how important it is to identify with a character on-screen. Diversity has always been a problem in TV and film, but I never fully realised how big a problem until I finally saw someone on screen that happened to look, dress, act and sound like me – a young black, gay character in the fun MTV series *I Just Want My Pants Back*. This was only in 2012.

Those who feel there isn't a problem tend to try and prove their point by rattling off a number of shows in an effort to prove that things are a lot more advanced than they are. Certain shows that I've seen and love like *Looking* and *Empire* and ones that I haven't seen but heard great things about such as *Queer as Folk* tend to come up quite often. But the thing is – these are the same shows that are named almost every time the argument is made, which just proves the point that these ignorant mouth-breathers are so vehemently trying to deny.

Diversity extends beyond depictions of ethnic minorities, or the occasional gay cast member as a secondary, or even a principal character within a show. Gender identity and religious diversity is the new tokenism of TV, especially in soap operas like *EastEnders* and *Hollyoaks* all falling over each other to be the first to cast a trans man, trans woman or Muslim family. But after over sixty years of these high profile British shows that supposedly represent our cultural and social diversity, how many have depicted the lives of gay men who are HIV-positive? In over three decades of HIV being the most important health issue affecting gay men only one programme has ever raised this subject with the character of Ste Hay in *Hollyoaks*, played by Kieron Richardson.

In May this year, I interviewed a lovely couple about what it's like being in a long-term serodiscordant

relationship, i.e. in which one person is HIV-positive and the other HIV-negative. They both said that they would love to see more characters, or couples on TV, where one or both of them were living with HIV and in which it isn't a huge issue. I agree with that. Of course, it's very easy to take something such as HIV and turn it into melodrama. But what it means to be HIV-positive has changed so dramatically in the last 10 years alone – and it's time that the big and small screen reflected that.

Things have come a long way since 1993's Philadelphia. We should be at the stage within TV and film where we have a substantial number of characters that have HIV in which it just appears to be background noise. But it's still not occurring as often as it should.

Still, there are instances in which this is true. *Takalani Sesame*, the South African edition of *Sesame Street* introduced the character, Kami in 2002. As probably the only puppet ever created to have HIV (you read that correctly), she uses many of her segments to raise awareness and reduce stigma of the virus. Also more recently, the character of Oliver in the in *How to Get Away with Murder* (boyfriend of main character Connor) was diagnosed with HIV at the end of the first season. Although it's still early days for the series, it seems as though it hasn't yet derailed the two at all.

When it comes to HIV specifically, it seems as though all but a fair few are shying away from an honest portrayal of what it means to have HIV in 2015. Could it be because many of them are scared or ill-informed themselves? Quite possibly. Film and programme makers should realise that having a genuinely diverse cast of characters in your content only makes your work stronger. It perplexes me that there are so many that have yet to figure that out.

“
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▲ **THIS MONTH:**

JAMES FILMED A TV MINISERIES, MADE CAMEOS IN FOUR HOLLYWOOD BLOCKBUSTERS, PERFORMED A ONE MAN VERSION OF THE COMPLETE WORKS OF SAMUEL BECKETT, WROTE A BIOGRAPHY OF THE GUY WHO LIVED NEXT DOOR TO HIM AT COLLEGE, COMPLETED HIS MASTERS IN TURFGRASS SCIENCE, ATTEMPTED TO TRADE PLACES WITH JULIAN ASSANGE AND MADE THE PERFECT DIRTY MARTINI WHICH HE RAISED IN A TOAST TO EXISTENTIALISM. GO JAMES!

BIEBER'S LATEST RELEASE



FANS HAVE BEEN GOING WILD THIS WEEK FOR JUSTIN BIEBER'S VERY REVEALING, LATEST RELEASE. GRAINY FROM AFAR BUT STUNNING IN HD, IT'S LONGER THAN MOST PEOPLE HAD EXPECTED, AND LUCKILY FOR HIM, IT HASN'T LEAKED. YES, THAT'S RIGHT, HIS NEW ALBUM *PURPOSE* IS OUT ON NOVEMBER 13TH!

Paris IS BURNING

SURE, STICK IT IN – BUT FOR GOD'S SAKE USE A JOHNNY

OH GOD. WE FUCKED. He came. He didn't use a condom. He's an idiot. I'm an idiot. We're both idiots. What if I have HIV?

Look, we've all been there, laid up on the sofa wondering if this time we've gone too far. I've been there a few times. I'm pretty obsessive about using condoms these days – anal, you might say – but I can't deny I've had unprotected sex. You're in an alleyway... the romance is high... he says he loves you. These things happen! Despite this, indeed, against all odds, thank God, I have never had a sexually transmitted disease. I know, right? I got lucky, in every sense, but a girl can't live on luck forever. Apparently.

If you test in time HIV is no longer a death sentence in the UK (people still die if they test too late, so do get tested ASAP), and I have many friends who are HIV positive and other perfectly happy and healthy. Still, it's hardly a disease you'd want to rush out and catch, is it? My liver is already strained due to all the hormones I take – these glorious breasts don't grow by magic, you know – so I'd rather not add a cocktail of HIV meds to my daily pill popping session. My bathroom cabinet already looks like the bastard lovechild of the perfume and prescriptions counters at Boots as it is.

No, I don't want HIV, but as a trans woman I'm at greater risk. There are many reasons for this and most of them are the result of discrimination. Trans people are likely to end up doing risky things like sex work, drug abuse and time in prison. I'm not judging. I've been I felt completely divorced from my body for many years and didn't always look after it like I should have done. Throw in higher-than-average rates of homelessness, poor mental health

distrust of public services and it's not hard to see how we became a high-risk group.

The Terrence Higgins Trust have some great resources on their website for trans people, though I rarely hear the community discuss our sexual health needs. I get it. It's boring. And there are a million and one other things to be worrying about, so sexual health isn't always our priority – but that's a dangerous mistake.

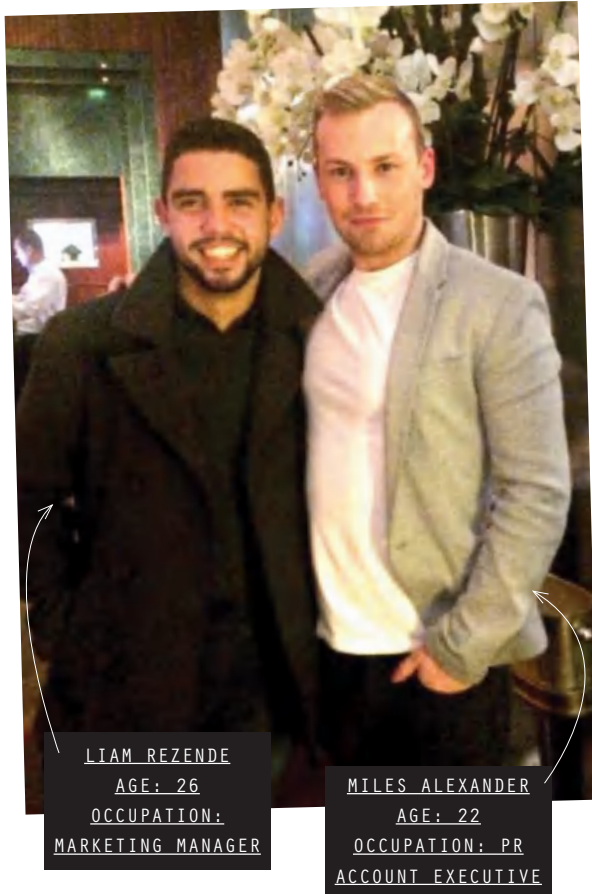
To top it all off, many trans people may feel uncomfortable seeking health advice. Let's say you're a trans woman who has a penis. Maybe you don't want to talk to your GP about that because, although your doctor knows you are trans, you'd just feel weird getting your junk out for them. Or maybe you had lower surgery years ago and you don't particularly feel like having that conversation with the folks down at your local clinic. Despite the fact that, depending on what type of surgery you've had down there, you may be at higher risk of infection. If your average person feels embarrassed getting their bits out for medical examination imagine how it can feel for people who already feel awkward about 'down there'.

What's the solution? Well, if you have a trans pal, drag them with you next time you pop down the sexual health clinic. Moral support, slag-bags together and all that. And talk. Gay and bisexual men are pretty good about discussing anything sexual, including health, but it's an issue that trans people really do need to start airing, like a sweaty set of genitals on a hot sunny day. Help them. Because the sooner you or your trans bff gets treated – or, even better, a clean bill of health – the sooner you can start enjoying lovely sex again. Lovely *safe* sex, obv.



Table for Two

LIAM REZENDE AND MILES ALEXANDER ENJOY A DATE AT ONE CANADA SQUARE, CANARY WHARF



LIAM REZENDE

AGE: 26

OCCUPATION:
MARKETING MANAGER

MILES ALEXANDER

AGE: 22

OCCUPATION: PR
ACCOUNT EXECUTIVE



FIRST IMPRESSIONS:

L: Although I was 25 minutes late he was really understanding. It felt like we'd known each other for ages. He was dressed well, made me feel instantly comfortable, and I knew from the beginning that we'd have a good night.

M: Despite being late, he had a really charming smile and was extremely polite. He's very cute and made me feel very comfortable.

AWKWARD MOMENTS:

L: We might have had a mutual shag – but that's London for you.

HOW WAS THE FOOD?

L: Quail starter was great. I had the lobster for main, which I probably fought with more than I ate, and I was also quite envious of his steak.

M: The food was really good. Generous portion sizes. My smoked

salmon starter was definitely a highlight. Oh, and the wine!

SNOG, MARRY, AVOID?

L: Snog.

M: Definitely snog.

WOULD YOUR MOTHER LIKE HIM?

L: Certainly! He's quite cheeky and easy to get along with. We also had quite a few things in common. (More than just that shag!)

M: My mum would really like him. He's an interesting guy and has a great sense of humour, which I think serves well when it comes to introducing a boy to the family.

SEE EACH OTHER AGAIN?

L: We both live south of the river so

we'll probably bump into each other, but I'd also be happy to see him again.

M: I'm sure I'll be seeing him again sometime.

DATE RATING OUT OF TEN



[8/10]

[8/10]



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Truly Madly Deeply



DUNCAN, 34, MARKETING MANAGER (LEFT)

We met more than six years ago through some mutual friends. We didn't really get together for another six months but from then on it all happened very quickly. By the time we went on a first date it was already very established that we were a couple. We went out for dinner and walked around London, and that was it. It was beautiful.

The first weekend away together we went to the Cotswolds. We had such a lovely time that we now go back there every year. After he proposed and we were looking at places to get married we thought of the Cotswolds, because we didn't really want to get married in London. We married at a place called Elmore Court in July. It was a lovely venue that we both liked. We're going to go on our honeymoon to Japan next year. We decided we wanted somewhere a bit unusual that would be really memorable.

We have the same interests and the same ideas, and I think in that sense our relationship has always been very easy; it's never felt like hard work. We probably fall out over my procrastinating and not doing things he's asked me to do, but we never really fight about anything big. I think it's important to know the things you like doing together, but remember that might not be everything. That's probably the key.

DYLAN, 31, DIGITAL MARKETER (RIGHT)

We first met in 2009 at a friend's birthday party. It was mostly his sense of humour and his cute smile that attracted me to him, and he's really excitable. After about a year of going out with each other we decided to move in together. Because we spent so much time together anyway, there were no massive surprises once we moved in; it was kind of easy and seamless really.

It was me who proposed in September last year. We went to the Champagne Bar at Tower 42 in London and had a picnic overlooking the sunset. I just popped the question and he said yes! It was a small wedding – only 65 guests, mostly friends, and immediate family. We had a barbeque and games on the lawn. It was a very easy, relaxed day.

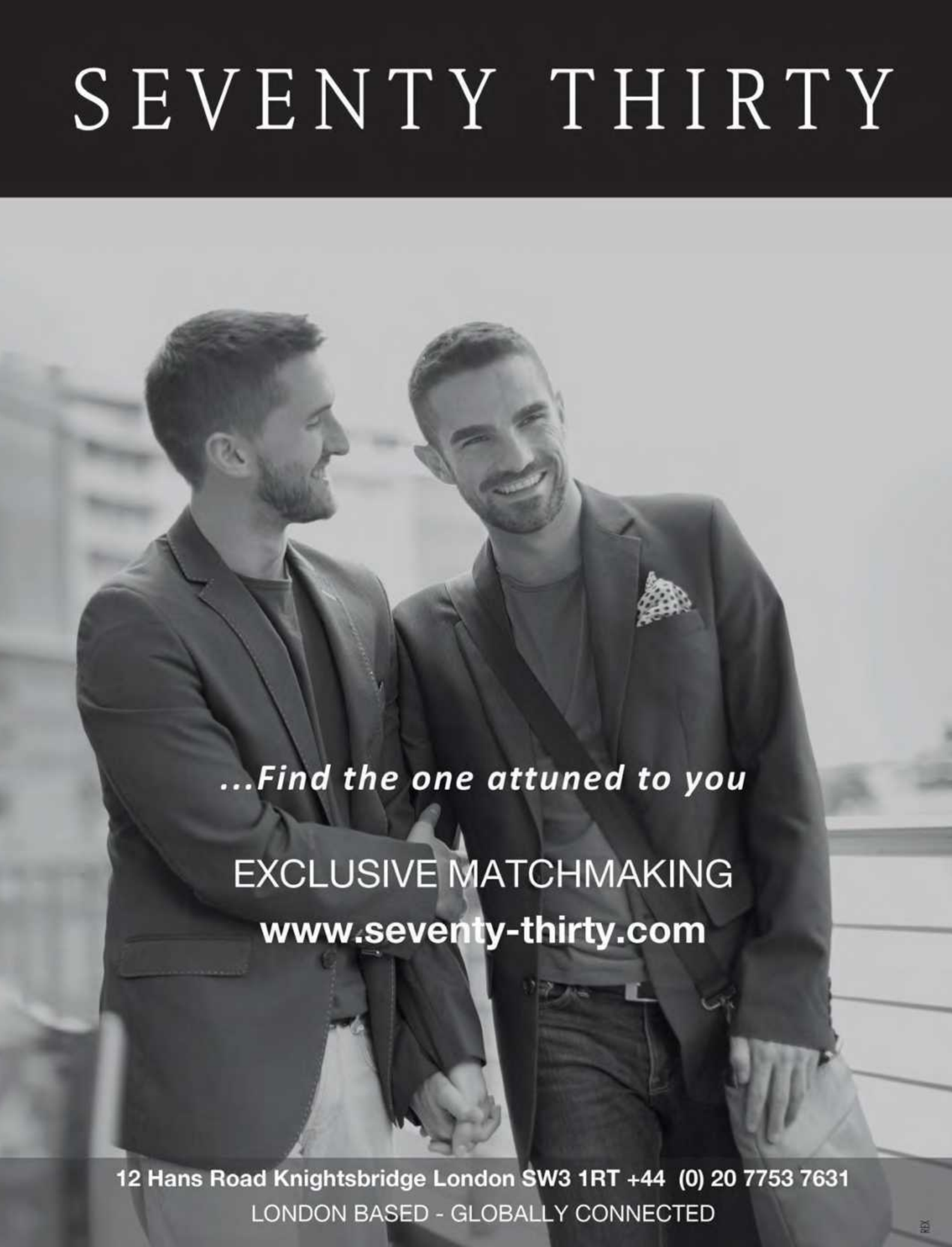
We travel a lot together. We've been to lots of places in Europe, and we've been to America twice! We've also been back to South Africa, where we're both from. We've just bought our first place and in the future we want to try living in different countries, maybe America. But we've no kids or anything else planned at the moment.

I think the key to a good relationship is just to be honest with each other; make sure the other one is happy. Don't sacrifice one person's happiness for the other because it will only bring resentment later on. It's about mutual respect and mutual trust.

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AS TOLD TO BEN KELLY

SEVENTY THIRTY

A black and white photograph of two men standing on a rooftop. They are both wearing dark blazers over light-colored shirts. The man on the left is looking at the man on the right, and they are both smiling. They are holding hands. The background shows a cityscape with buildings.

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“A LOT OF TRANS PEOPLE WILL GET WITH A GUY TO VALIDATE THEMSELVES, BECAUSE THEY HAVEN'T BEEN LOVED”

Mya Taylor is the breakout star of groundbreaking transgender comedy-drama *Tangerine*, where she plays a sex worker whose adventures on the seedy streets of Hollywood are both hilarious and heartbreaking. A sensation at the Sundance Film Festival, it also wowed audiences at last month's London Film Festival, which is when *Attitude* caught up with Taylor, 24, to chat about issues raised by the film, progress in the transgender community and why haters should mind their own damn business...

How do you feel about the producers of *Tangerine* launching an Oscar campaign for Kitana Kiki Rodriguez and yourself as best actress and best supporting actress?

I feel blessed. Life has been really hard for me before all the movie stuff and everything. I used to have to sell my body to get by because I couldn't get a job. I tried so hard. I applied for janitorial jobs, for pet-sitting, for car dealerships because I know how to sell cars – I know how to sell my body so I can certainly sell cars.

What were the big challenges of making this movie?

I'd started my transition three months before so I was not comfortable with myself. I'd walk around with big shades on, even at night-time, because I was so insecure about how I looked and I'd wear jackets

because I was insecure about my body. I never struggled with people being mean to me during my transition, except people of my own colour, particularly the women when they figure it out. I don't know what the root of the problem is and I don't know why they don't just mind their own fucking business. One of them got punched in the face for it.

Does it feel like the road to transgender recognition is still a long one?

It does, yes. I think about how in society it's 'Trans people want us to accept them' but I'm like, 'No bitch, I don't want you to accept me. What makes you think you have the right to decide you're going to accept a trans person or not? It's not about acceptance, it's

about respect'.

What is the film saying about the men who are attracted to transgender women?

I feel like a lot of men try to use us as fetishes. A lot of trans people will get with a guy to validate themselves, because they haven't been loved, and we are so known for prostitution and porn that some guys think we're all about that. One guy was messaging me with 'I want to suck your dick' and I'm like 'You don't even know if I have a dick and what makes you think I want your nasty-ass mouth on it?' That is so disrespectful and so fucking nasty.

• *TANGERINE* OPENS IN CINEMAS ON FRIDAY 13TH NOVEMBER. READ THE FULL INTERVIEW ON ATTITUDE.CO.UK



MYA TAYLOR (LEFT)
IN *TANGERINE*

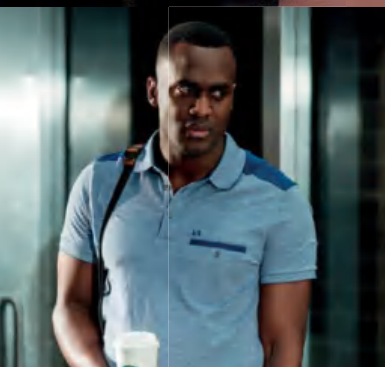
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Like most authors, Hanya Yanagihara is fairly unassuming. Looking at her, you'd never guess that she was the mind behind the titanic novel *A Little Life* – one of the year's great literary triumphs. Yet this 41-year-old Hawaiian native turned it around in just eighteen months. It's particularly impressive as she managed it around her full-time day job as Editor at Large for *Conde Nast Traveller*. "Having a day job is terrible for me in a lot of ways, but it does help because it really helps you compartmentalise your life, and use your time effectively," she claims.

Many critics and readers have labelled *A Little Life* a gay novel, and although it does profile a same-sex relationship and features a few other minor gay characters, to classify it as gay feels reductive. Hanya has deconstructed the traditional notions of the kinds of relationships men should be in, in order to let them develop as naturally as possible, without the labels or expectations which she feels limit men emotionally. At the heart of the novel, we see a strong male friendship become a love affair. "It's simply a love story," she says, "and one of the things that has been particularly humbling is the number of gay men who have reached out to me online, but I wonder if one of the things that is resonating with them is this idea that male friendship is much blurrier than we give credit for it being, and there are different ways men express love for each other that we don't really think about because we think of love between men in very binary terms."

At 720 pages, *A Little Life* is a real hulk of a book, and my own copy is almost as battered as its lead character Jude – who escapes a childhood of devastating abuse physically, but never mentally. Hanya has her own ideas about why readers are once again engaging with longer books like hers, and the novel which did win the Man Booker, Marlon James' *A Brief History of Seven Killings*. "My personal theory is that we all hunger for something immersive. When you are living in such a sound bite, Instagram, Twitter culture, there is something really luxurious, and intimate about disappearing into another life."

Following the media blitz around the Man Booker, Hanya is back in New York, where she now works as Deputy Editor at the *New York Times* style magazine *T*, where I suggest she might start work on her next big novel, though she only laughs cautiously: "if there is one!"

THE WOMAN BEHIND THE GAY NOVEL OF THE YEAR

Hanya Yanagihara narrowly missed out on the Man Booker Prize for her epic second novel A Little Life. Still, her story of an abused man who finds solace in a same-sex relationship continues to break hearts around the world and has a lot of life left in it yet.



Paul Gambaccini

One of Britain's most beloved broadcasters talks about his year being falsely accused under Operation Yewtree; an ordeal which threatened his livelihood, his sanity and destroyed his faith in British justice

Words: Ben Kelly / Photography: Leon Csernoblavek

Paul Gambaccini is known as the Professor of Pop. It's a title he's earned well. At 19, the New York born rock and roll fan was having his hit picks published in *Billboard*. In 1973 he interviewed future lifelong friend Elton John for his first cover of *Rolling Stone*. While studying at Oxford he took up a job with the BBC, one of the few dependable hands at the corporation fit for presenting across Radio 1, 2, 3 and 4 throughout a loyal 40 year service. He delivered reviews on GMTV, performed annual hosting duties at the Ivor Novello Awards and worked prolifically on countless volumes of *The Guinness Book of British Hit Singles*. Even the most distinguished pop academics bow to the wisdom of Professor Paul.

It is for this wealth of musical knowledge that I have occasionally reached out to him for quotes for *Attitude* features. In July 2014 I approached Paul for comment on a feature I was writing about The Beatles' manager Brian Epstein, knowing he was on bail, after being arrested as part of Operation Yewtree. Unfounded accusations had been made against him. Paul expressed both surprise and gratitude at hearing his encyclopaedic knowledge was still warranted and explained sadly that he had been dropped by almost all his professional colleagues and allies in the media. I met him on London's Southbank for a coffee and a chat, and he strongly proclaimed his innocence and depicted the months of personal hell he had been put through as a result of his arrest.

It was strange speaking to a man most famous for his professional brilliance at communication, who felt unable to express himself publically, not just because the BBC had taken him off air. The man I met seemed on the edge of breaking; stuck on a continual re-bailing process that kept his reputation and

freedom hanging with uncertainty in the air. He desperately needed his story to be heard, and with interest, I listened.

Speaking to him again a year later, in August 2015, his situation is altogether different. Told that there was no case to answer for, and with the investigation disbanded, he is at last no longer on bail. Luckily his communicative capacity never left him during the dark time under arrest, and he has written a powerful book, *Love, Paul Gambaccini: My Year Under The Yewtree*, a day-by-day diary account of his ordeal. When I sit down to interview him at his home on London's Southbank – with shelves upon shelves of records adorning the walls – I found a man whose name has been cleared but whose heart remains heavy as a result of his experience. He has a lot to get off his chest about his experience of being falsely accused.

Paul links his ordeal back to October 2012, when he says two things made him believe false accusations might be made against him. He had already been asked by various media outlets to comment on the Savile story. When he offered his opinions, some media pictured him on the front page next to Savile. Naturally media-savvy, with a lifetime of experience under his belt, he thought the associative link would put him in the public's mind alongside the most notorious paedophile in UK history. He was further disturbed by the way the police were urging the public to make accusations of historic abuse.

"My heart sank when I saw on the BBC website that the Metropolitan Police had opened a dedicated website," he says, "and a dedicated phone line, inviting the public to accuse celebrities of sexual perversion. Subsequently, police officers went on air several times and said 'Come forward and you will be believed.'" Their methodology for the investigation left him aghast. "In what other crime in the history of this country have the police gone on television and said 'Accuse

someone and you will be believed'?" He shakes his head. "This subverts the fundamental tenet of British justice which is innocent until proven guilty. Now it was guilty until proven innocent. The Metropolitan Police panicked. They feared the general public would take it out on them for having failed to stop Savile during his lifetime, and so, in an attempt to divert the spotlight off themselves, they launched a witch hunt."

In any claim made, the police persistently used the term 'victim' rather than 'accuser' which angered Paul, as he realised he too could be unjustly targeted, though he could do nothing but sit and wait, anticipating the worst. "I racked my brains thinking, who might have a grudge against me? Did I have a bad date once? And, of course, all that energy was wasted, because when I was accused, it was by someone I'd never known in my life."

Paul wasn't told who had made the accusations; just that they were two men, both under the legal age of consent of 21 when they alleged Paul had sexual relations with them in the late 1970s and early 1980s. Their dates didn't all match the time period Paul lived at the London address they cited as the location of the alleged offences. Furthermore, he says it all dated from before he even started having same-sex relations; a delicate fact that he became accustomed to revealing in these desperate circumstances.

Paul was reasonably lucky in that his case was one of the less profiled of Yewtree. Nevertheless, he switched off from all media, reluctant to see anything that had been written about him while he was advised not to speak publicly in his own defence. He relied heavily on his 30-year-old husband Chris, an actor who he met in 2010. The pair had their civil partnership in 2012. Chris kept an eye on every newspaper and social media thread for anything and everything being written about Paul's case, and those of others, feeding back





anything positive.

The Metropolitan Police confiscated all his computers, gadgets and diaries, and travelled as far as Los Angeles and Melbourne to interview people he had known only briefly at various points in his life, some of whom he hasn't spoken to in decades. Although content in the knowledge that none of his acquaintances would support the accusations, the inquiry nevertheless caused him huge distress and embarrassment. He and his husband were quizzed about the most intimate details of their sex lives.

Paul estimates that about six months into his bail, it must have become clear to the police that no one was going to jump on what he terms "the Gambaccini bandwagon". Meetings with his former flatmates, friends and colleagues were even cancelled, as they continually spoke up in his favour, and – crucially – no other accusers came forward. When the case was over, the police confirmed to Paul that when another Yewtree suspect was named in the press, they received phone call after phone call from other would-be accusers; but in his case, the phone never rang.

As much as Paul expected the right-wing press to shine a spotlight on the arrest of BBC personalities like himself, he was devastated to see the BBC live broadcast the police raid on Cliff Richard's house in August 2014. Paul says he found it heartbreaking. "I had dedicated my career to this institution, which I had considered as one of the noblest in the world. BBC television acquiesced with totalitarianism; they played the role of Pravda in the Soviet Union. It was the low point in the history of the BBC; until three weeks later, when upper management went to the Home Affairs Select Committee and defended having broadcast the raid, which was a new low point in the history of the BBC; until the raid coverage was submitted to the RTS for an award, and I'm glad to say that it lost and was booed."

Paul was surprised that it was the right-wing press who were more supportive of him than the left-wing press, which he considered to be his natural home turf. He is also angry that he found himself out in the cold when it came to his familiar political territory. Having long been a strong supporter of the Labour party, only a year before his arrest he hosted a fundraiser at his home, attended by Ed Miliband, members of the shadow cabinet and celebrities like David Tennant and Brian May. Yet, in December 2013, Paul was subtly uninvited from a Labour gala fundraiser to be held two days later.

"I supported, and raised money for the

*'I racked my
brains thinking,
who might have a
grudge against me?
Did I have a bad
date once?'*

Labour party for a quarter of a century, and many of those people stood by me throughout this," Paul admits, referencing older figures like Neil Kinnock. "The younger generation are more concerned with the Twitter cycle than they are with who has been supporting the party for a quarter of a century, and they'll throw you over the side if they think they're going to get bad tweets about you, and that's how Miliband lost a substantial part of the Labour party."

The case against Paul was eventually dropped on 10 October 2014, but that was after being re-bailed six times over twelve months, with shifting dates, which he often had to learn about first through the media. As a result, Paul is pushing for bail reform, among other measures. "False accusers must be named and shamed" he believes, "they must be prosecuted or offered medical assistance, because many false accusers are distressed individuals."

He says he doesn't reserve much anger for his accusers, pointing out that he doesn't know anything about their state of mind. Rather it is the police leadership and the Crown Prosecution Service he resents, for the thin case they pursued against him. When the case was dismissed, the CPS said there had been 'insignificant evidence to prosecute', let alone convict.

The CPS wrote to both of Paul's accusers at the end of the case, but not to him, something which shocked MPs when the Home Affairs Select Committee discussed bail reform, and Paul testified alongside a defiant Alison Saunders, the current Director of Public Prosecutions. When the committee's report was published, it stated that Paul must receive a written explanation of events from the CPS, which he only received seven months later.

Having sympathy for Paul's plight does not equate to dismissing the cause of genuine victims of historic abuse, and indeed he says he feels angry on their behalf. "Those organisations who represent the genuinely

abused should be furious, because all that money and time that could have been spent on real cases has been squandered. Despite millions of pounds of expenditure, and thousands of hours of police time – money and time which could have been spent on genuine cases – they chased celebrities, because they thought they needed to nail a few celebrity scalps to the wall to prove they were doing something, about something they had not been doing for decades."

Paul's book is a fascinating account; part emotional rollercoaster, part inside investigative work, as he attempts to understand the wheels that were turning against him. For someone who chose to live in this country, and devote his life to it, it was upsetting to read in the book how seriously he has been considering moving back to the United States, having felt so let down by British justice and society. I ask him if he has made any decisions on this front yet, but he merely replies, "Project pending."

I wanted to tell Paul's story not just because he was proven to be a falsely accused, innocent man, but because he is a treasure of the gay community, which he himself has represented and supported immeasurably. When the Terence Higgins Trust had its funding cut by £300,000 in the mid 1990s, Paul personally set about raising that very amount from his network of friends; just one such example of his extensive philanthropy.

Paul feels he has received little support from within his own community, many of whom dropped loyalties at the sniff of doubt. As he surmises at the end of his book, "It happened to me. Unless there is reform, it will happen again. It could happen to you. What are you going to do about it?"

He admits he owes much to his husband Chris, whom he calls "the greatest argument for same-sex marriage." From getting to know them as a pair, and seeing the weighty role Chris has undertaken in guiding Paul through his travails, it's hard not to be inspired by his solidarity and loyalty. The book is dedicated to Chris: "whose love saved my life."

Paul is understandably furious about what he has been through, and as a fellow music fan I know he won't mind me evoking the words of the Dixie Chicks; he's not ready to make nice with those who have dragged him through the mud. But although the ordeal has wreaked havoc with his bank balance, torn up his belief in justice, and temporarily tarnished his name, he has emerged from the other side. He's back on the air at the BBC where he belongs, and the smile is back on his face; only a little more knowing than before.



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LADS! LADS! LADS!

HOUSE OF HOLLAND EXCLUSIVE
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House of Holland has been injecting fun and provocation into womenswear for years, and we've been eagerly awaiting the inevitable menswear collection from designer Henry Holland. He presented his inaugural collection with Selfridges at London Collections: Men back in June; a collection that took notes from various youth subcultures like Teds, casuals, buffalo kids and ravers. It fused together sportswear with tailoring, adding fun slogans and some tongue-in-cheek prints to proceedings. Selfridges stock the entire collection along with a wealth of other HoH accessories, such as stationery and a 'LAD' calendar from his collaboration with Martin Parr. Available in store and online at selfridges.com

SELFRIDGES: HOUSE OF HOLLAND / MODEL: JACK BUCHANAN AT SELECT MODELS / GROOMING: SANDRA HAD USING MAC / FASHION ASSISTANTS: NICK BYAM AND JOSH WOODEND

TOMMY HILFIGER GOES BOLD



We've barely cooled down from the Rafael Nadal X Tommy Hilfiger ambassador launch that saw him strip down to his (Hilfiger) pants this summer. Tommy have also released their new strong and sporty fragrance TH Bold for men. Mr Nadal has taken his top off and flexed his muscles to front the campaign, and we certainly ain't complaining.

The TH Bold Fragrance EDT 100ml, £51, 50ml, £35, and 30ml, £28, are exclusively available at The Fragrance Shop until January 2016, when it goes worldwide.

The science bit: Opening notes include crisp citrusy pomelo, tangerine and bergamot that follows through to herbal and spicy lavenders and cardamom. As the scent develops extracts of jasmine and mandarin blossom balanced with a woody boronia accord are introduced. It then winds down with orange flower, which is balanced with masculine notes of cedar, sandalwood and vetiver.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY DAVID MARQUEZ
EDIT & WORDS BY JOSEPH KOCHARIAN
ASSISTED BY NICK BYAM

WAHL BEARD OIL

WORDS: JOSEPH KOCHARIAN



Beard maintenance is serious business these days. There are dedicated beard salons and barbers, and techniques on how to maintain, moisturise and sculpt the furry stuff. Not everyone has the time to go to the barbers multiple times a week, so Wahl have launched their first beard conditioning oil to help you prep your beard at home. They offer four fragrances to give your beard a great scent: 'Refresh' - which gives you a crisp peppermint, eucalyptus and tea tree wake-up call; 'Revive' is a bit punchier with citrus and sharper notes; 'Relax' has warming sweet scents of orange and ginger; and 'Repair' is smooth and soothing. All oils contain a mix of moisturising ingredients such as almond oil, jojoba seed oil, grape seed oil and castor oil. It ensures your beard gets the care it needs.

Instructions are simple: apply a pea-sized amount to one side and, distribute it evenly with the other hand, work into the beard and the skin underneath. Wahl recommend you use it three times a week for the best effect. It's a really easy way of keeping your beard fresh.



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EXPERT INSIDER



WE MEET LUSH'S GLOBAL BRAND TEAM LEADER ALESSANDRO COMISSO WHO GIVES US EXPERT ADVICE ON HIS TOP 3 LUSH PRODUCTS. ALESSANDRO IS A DEVOTED SPOKESPERSON FOR LGBT RIGHTS, CAMPAIGNING ON THE NEED FOR ACCEPTANCE AND RESPECT FOR GLOBAL LGBT COMMUNITIES. HE PLAYED AN INTEGRAL PART IN SOME OF LUSH'S MOST SUCCESSFUL CAMPAIGNS – NOTABLY THE 2014 AWARD-WINNING '#SIGNOFLOVE' COLLABORATION WITH ALLOUT.ORG, WHICH WAS THE BRAND'S FIRST GLOBAL LGBT CAMPAIGN. THE 3 PRODUCTS CHOSEN ARE ALL CHRISTMAS INSPIRED AND IN STORES NOW.

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Who knew toothpaste could be sexy? These little fellas will blow you away – literally. Mingle among naughty passion fruit and tongue-tingling electric daisies. Nibble one between the teeth and start brushing. Since these launched, they've gone down rather well. Spit, don't swallow!



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It's like a body lotion, but you use it in the shower. This really helps wake you up in the morning and has you standing to attention. Full of shea butter, menthol and peppermint oil, you'll be fresh and smooth from head to (mistle) toe. Scoop it out, swipe right over wet skin, rinse off and you're ready to tingle all the way!

SEASONS GREETINGS GIFT BOX £24.50

Who wouldn't want an impressive package to unwrap on Christmas morning? An awesome foursome to keep you fresh throughout the holiday season, you don't have to have a beard to use this... but it helps! It features Kalamazoo beard and facial wash, Seanik shampoo bar, Outback Mate soap and Lord of Misrule shower cream.



LUSH.CO.UK

➔ CRUSH



RON DORFF

We've got a major crush on Paris/Swedish brand Ron Dorff. The premium lifestyle sportswear brand have produced everything from clothing and fragrances to body care and candles, and no single detail has gone unnoticed; even their brand ambassadors (like this lovely gentleman pictured) have been thought out. On the apparel side they do plenty of premium loungewear, sportswear, knitwear, swimming shorts, trunks and underwear. The clothes present an effortless symbiotic relationship between Scandinavian and Parisian style. It's super soft, super chic and super simple. We're in love. RONDORFF.COM

JIMMY CHOO PREVIEW SPRING/SUMMER '16

Jimmy Choo are catering for both the introvert and the extrovert with their spring/summer 2016 collection. The brand have given us a sneak peak at what's in store for shoppers, and we're already obsessed with their Lars shoe. It comes in Galaxy patent in white, for the more gregarious man, and also a slick, shiny black, if you're feeling a more classic look.

JIMMYCHOO.COM



LOUIS VUITTON'S GOT BAGGAGE



Louis Vuitton designer Kim Jones always takes us on a journey around the world for his collections, and so it's fitting he has the accessories to match. For their SS16 show, Louis Vuitton showcased a series of practical bags. We're lusting after this particular one (pictured) that can be carried as either a tote or backpack. They all come with the signature LV logo and added rain cover to keep your prized possessions dry during the wet winter. LOUISVUITTON.COM

DIESEL ROCK N JOGG

Diesel have taken a nostalgic trip back to 70s and 90s fashion and music for their latest pieces. The brand's creative director Nicola Formichetti said 'We melded different influences so they can be worn in an inspiring mix and match way'. There are plenty of strong American influences, including folk, glam rock, preppy casual and 90s deconstruction, so there's no limit to layering up and interpreting history in your own style.

DIESEL.COM



OLIVER CHESHIRE FOR AUTOGRAPH

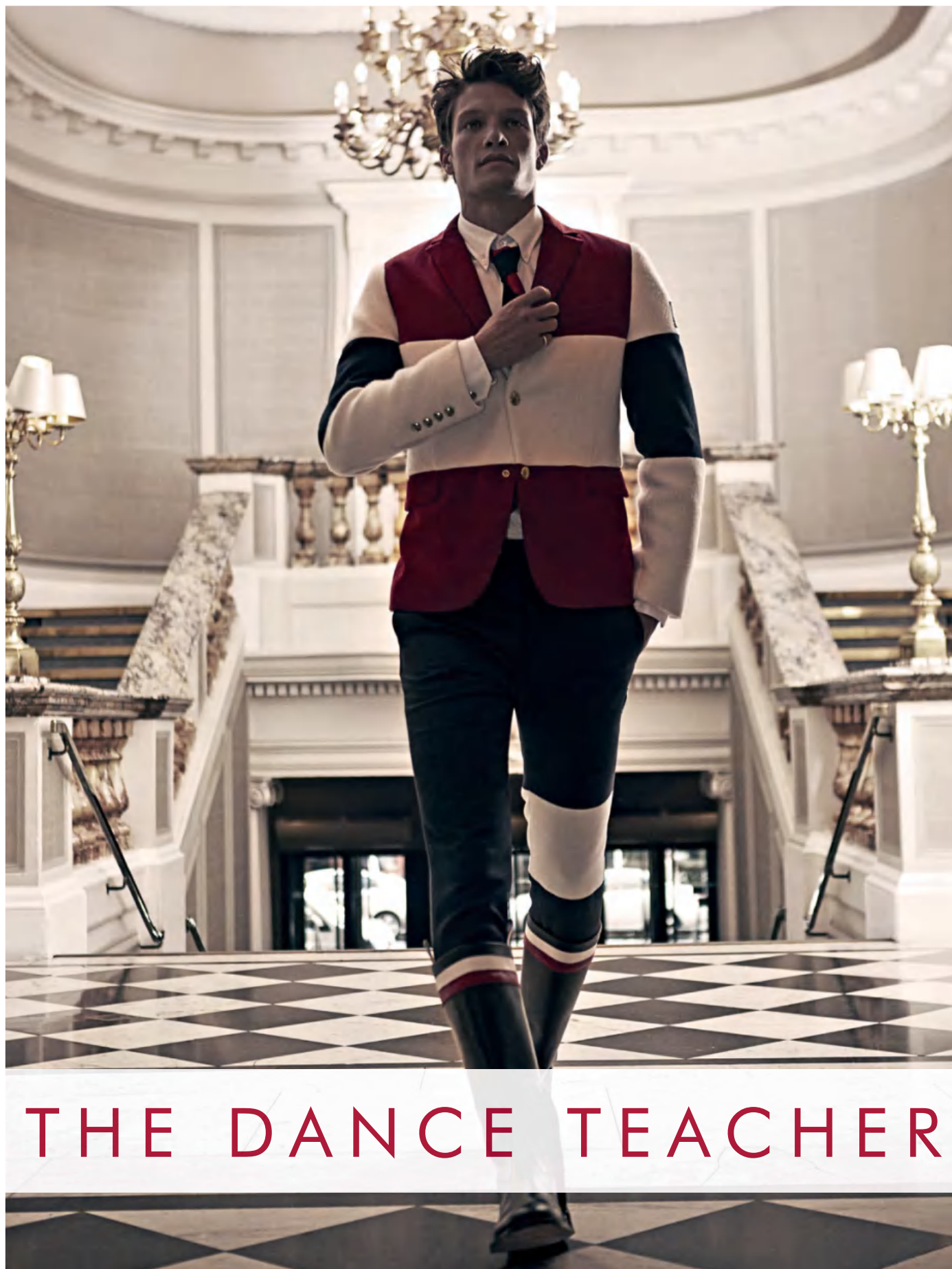


We've seen plenty of the 'face' of M&S' Autograph range. Oliver got dressed up in the stuff for this exclusive Attitude shoot, and then followed it up by winning Most Stylish Man at our 2015 Attitude Awards. The male supermodel wears everything well, but we just wanted to revisit this ombre fade jumper, that's totally an attainable crush at £39.50, as well as trousers for £45. MARKSANDSPENCER.COM




PEANUTS X LACOSTE COLLECTION

Lacoste are revisiting their 2010 collaboration with the Peanuts gang. Snoopy, Charlie Brown, Lucy and Linus all take on the signature Lacoste crocodile in the collection. The sketches have been embroidered on the brand's emblematic polo shirts that come in white, navy and grey, as well as sweatshirts. We adore! [THE COLLECTION IS AVAILABLE IN LACOSTE BOUTIQUES IN NOVEMBER 2015](#)



THE DANCE TEACHER



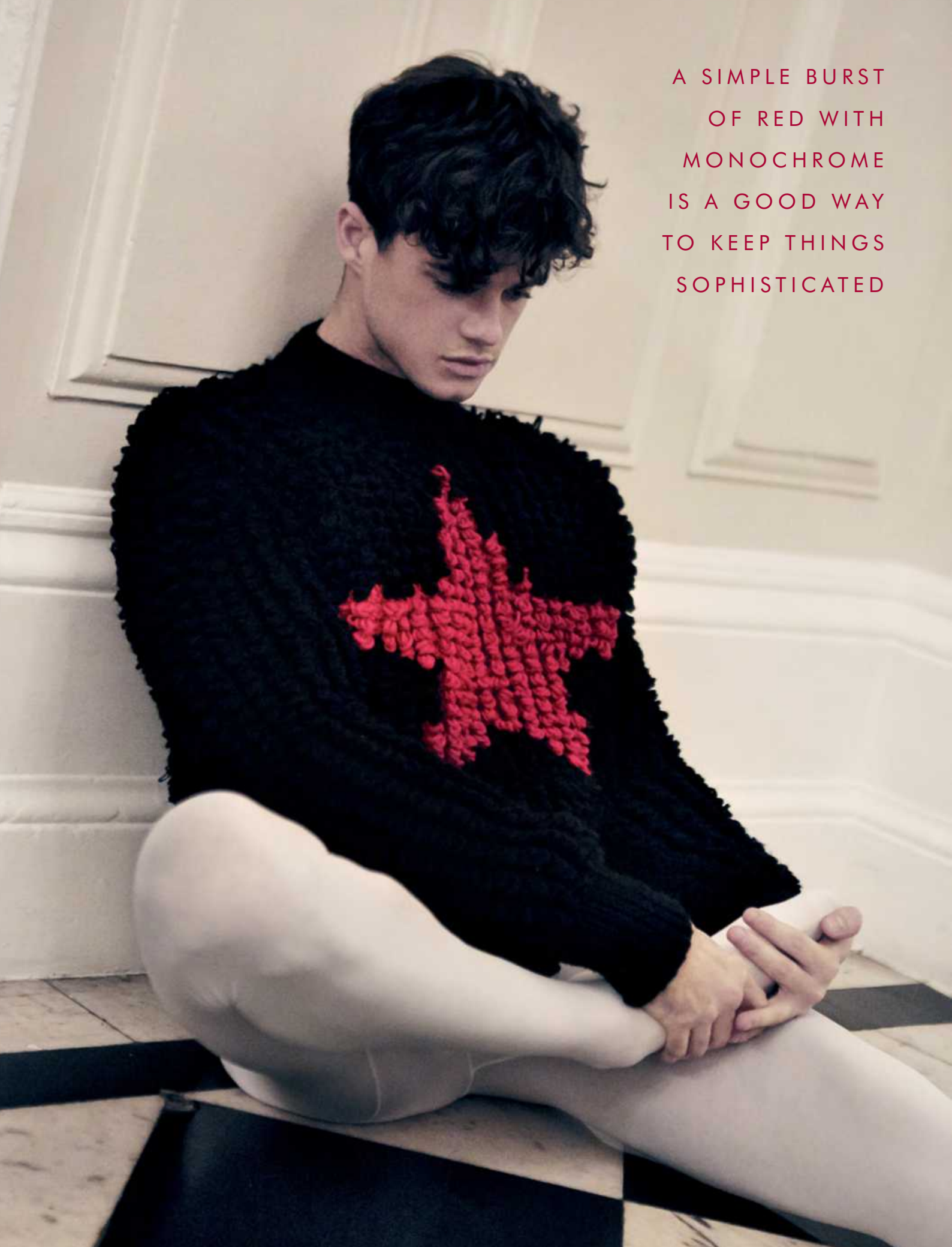
LEFT:
DANNY WEARS BLAZER, £1,655; SHIRT, £360; TROUSERS, £920; BOOTS, £895;
TIE, POA ALL BY MONCLER GAMME BLEU

THIS PAGE:
ROLL NECK BY H&M, £29.99; TROUSERS BY MCQ, £180;
JORDAN, THEIO AND CHRISTIAN WEAR WOOL BLEND FELT SIDE CAP, £195 ALL
BY EMPORIO ARMANI; DANCE TIGHTS (THROUGHOUT), STYLIST'S OWN

Red can be a strong colour to contend with, but there are plenty of ways to introduce it so it doesn't overpower you

PHOTOGRAPHY BY LEONARDO CORREDOR
FASHION BY JOSEPH KOCHARIAN
SHOT ON LOCATION IN THE GRAND HALL AT THE GRAND
CONNAUGHT ROOMS, LONDON

A SIMPLE BURST
OF RED WITH
MONOCHROME
IS A GOOD WAY
TO KEEP THINGS
SOPHISTICATED






LEFT:
CHRISTIAN WEARS JUMPER
BY TOPMAN DESIGN, £150

RIGHT:
CHRISTIAN WEARS SWEATER, £80
AND JOGGING BOTTOMS, £110
BOTH BY CALVIN KLEIN







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ROLL NECK BY
H&M, £29.99;
JUMPER (OVER THE
SHOULDERS) BY
OLIVER SPENCER,
£130 AT MR PORTER

LEFT:
DANNY WEARS FULL
PERSIAN PRINT IN
WOOL WITH RED
BANDING DETAILS
ON HEM, €3,600
BY GIVENCHY BY
RICCARDO TISCI



DANNY WEARS ALPACA AND WOOL VELOUR
BLOUSON WITH DROPPED SHOULDERS, NOTCH
LAPELS, SNAP CLOSURE, JERSEY HEMLINE
AND CUFFS, £870; RIBBED WOOL CREWNECK
WITH INTERWOVEN LEATHER STRIPS ON THE
FRONT, £355; DOUBLE MOHAIR BLEND WIDE-
LEG TROUSERS WITH SINGLE-PLEAT FRONT,
BELT LOOPS AND BRUSHSTROKE DETAIL ON
THE LEFT LEG, £785; WOOL BLEND FELT
SIDE CAP, £195 ALL BY EMPORIO ARMANI,
SHOES BY LOUIS LEEMAN, £460

RIGHT:
JORDAN WEARS JOGGERS BY H&M X BALMAIN,
£49.99, TRAINERS BY Y-3, £260



DANNY WEARS ANTIQUE RED
SCULPTURAL SHEARLING
CHESTERFIELD COAT,
£3,494; INDIGO PURPLE
PRINTED COTTON QUILTED
JACKET, £1,995; BLACK
CHERRY CORDUROY STRAIGHT
LEG TROUSERS, £495;
ANIMAL PRINT SHEARLING
SCARF, £795 ALL BY
BURBERRY PRORSUM



JACKET, £175 AND TROUSERS, £255 BOTH BY
DIESEL BLACK GOLD; SHOES BY LOUIS LEEMAN, £410



CHRISTIAN, JORDAN AND THEIO WEAR JEANS BY RUFSKIN, £129;
THEO WEARS T-SHIRT BY RUFSKIN ARCHIVE



FULL HEAD TO TOE RED CAN BE GREAT—
GO FOR DARKER AND SUBTLER SHADES

PRINTS AND PATTERNS MEAN YOU CAN
INTRODUCE BOLD PANELS OR FLECKS
OF RED TO YOUR OUTFIT



ABOVE: DANNY WEARS BLAZER, £1,655; SHIRT, £360; TROUSERS, £920; TIE, POA ALL BY MONCLER GAMME BLEU

RIGHT: DANNY WEARS FULL PERSIAN PRINT COAT IN WOOL WITH RED BANDING DETAILS ON HEM, €3,600; PRINTED SHIRT IN CHIFFON WITH PRINTED POCKETS AND RED BANDING, POA; PRINTED TROUSERS IN WOOL BLACK BASE, €950; PRINTED SKIRT IN WOOL, €650; BOTTINES EN CUIR DE VEAU MARRON, €850; THEIO WEARS FULLY PRINTED TROUSERS IN WOOL WITH RED BASE, POA; BOTTINES EN CUIR DE VEAU MARRON, €850 ALL BY GIVENCHY BY RICCARDO TISCI



STOCKISTS

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Fashion assisted by Nick Byam
 Models: Christian Williams and Danny Beauchamp
 at Select Model Management; Jordan Kennedy and
 Theio Maddix at Established Models
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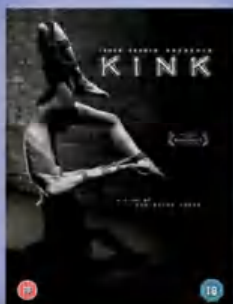
Antidote at London Friend is the UK's only specialist drug & alcohol service working exclusively with LGBT people since 2002.
www.londonfriend.org.uk/antidote



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YOUTUBE BOY

YOUTUBE STAR TYLER OAKLEY BRANCHES OUT
WITH A NEW BOOK AND DOCUMENTARY FILM

WORDS: BEN KELLY | PHOTOGRAPHY: RAE MARSHALL

At just 26, Michigan born Tyler Oakley already boasts 500 million views on YouTube, where he holds court in varied, fun videos aimed at the youth of the world. As a loud and proud LGBT voice who does admirable political and charitable work, he carries a weight in this online community that is as powerful as more mainstream personalities like Ellen DeGeneres and RuPaul.

It's difficult to conceive of what it means to be a YouTube star until you spend some time watching those who get it right. Tyler is one such star. A brief click through his most popular videos shows a confident personality – one that's more aware of self presentation than most TV stars. He attempts formats you literally couldn't find anywhere else, and engages continually with an army of loyal fans.

Since he began posting videos in 2007, his following has slowly built up to such dizzying heights that he can expect between 500,000 and 1 million views on a video within its first week. Altogether, he has almost 8 million subscribers, and 500 million views. "It kind of took me by surprise when it became something bigger," he explains, "because that was never my intention. Back when I started out nobody was doing books or tours or anything like that, and now to get those opportunities, it's mind blowing." In 2012, through a combination of advertising revenue and a collective of opportunities resulting from his online fame, he was able to 'go full-time'.

The concept of a YouTuber building their own business empire in this way is still in its infancy, and people like Tyler, Zoella, Troye Sivan and Connor Franta, are at the helm of this exciting time. "Nobody would have thought even a year ago that this is where the internet community



would be. With every opportunity, it's uncharted territory for a lot of us."

The popular notion of what it takes to be a success online is through a viral video, but Tyler says that to be a sustained, continued success, there's no fast pass: hard work remains essential. "For me it was all about committing to a regular schedule. I never really had a viral video. Every year I've had one or two videos do well, but I've never had something explode outside of my own audience, and for me it was very nice because it became a slow and gradual growth to get me where I am today."

In August 2013 he interviewed One Direction, garnering 4 million views, and in September 2014 The White House reached out to him to make a video with Michelle Obama to promote her latest education campaign – a testament to the influence he exerts, with millions of young people looking to him as a strong LGBT role model. And, considering his videos are watched across the world, including countries where homosexuality is illegal, the soft power he has to influence young people's perceptions cannot be overstated. "Obviously representation matters," he explains, "and for someone to feel they know somebody who identifies as LGBTQ, that could be a game changer for their views, their politics and how they treat people in their own lives."

Tyler's work extends beyond his core entertainment medium, and he really does put his money where his mouth is, particularly in his support for The Trevor Project, a U.S. based organisation for the prevention of suicide among LGBT youth. "It kind of comes hand in hand with my audience, and hearing what they go through. Even when I meet them in person, on tour, they'll tell me the struggles that they go through with identity, or acceptance, or even suicide prevention."

'I THINK ABOUT LGBT SEX EDUCATION WITHIN SCHOOLS, AND THAT'S SO IMPORTANT, WHETHER OR NOT YOU HAVE KIDS WHO OPENLY IDENTIFY AS SUCH'

He now hosts their annual red carpet event TrevorLIVE, : raises money for them each on his birthday, which thus far amounts to about \$1 million. He's now also on the charity's board of Directors, literally taking a top seat at the table to speak on behalf of his viewers. "For me it's like the opportunity to liaise between a certain demographic, and an organisation which serves that demographic," he says. "Even just telling people about them could literally save lives."

And, as *Attitude* marks World AIDS Day with this Red Is Tyler also spoke to us about the need for better education in health for young people. "I think about LGBT sex education within schools, and that's so important, whether or not you have kids who openly identify as such, there are going to be people who need that education and sometimes that's a matter of life or death. I don't think I had any when I was growing up, but it's important. Advocating is life saving and sex education within schools has so much need to grow."

With *Binge*, his first book, Tyler is aiming to reach out further to his fan base, with a collection of essays somewhere between the style of David Sedaris and Amy Poehler. While he is candid on videos, it's immediately apparent that he is willing to divulge more in print; notably his coming out stories, having his heart broken, and a harrowing experience of domestic abuse. "It was an opportunity to tell a lot of stories that I didn't feel comfortable telling in videos. Videos are

generally shorter, and a bit more snappy, and with the book I'm able to dive into subjects that might get a little bit more serious, that I want to tell my audience about, but I wouldn't know how to tell them through video form."

One constant theme that emerges from speaking to Tyler, and engaging with his work, is that he permits no barriers between himself and his fans; something which is probably indicative of the YouTube, social media generation as a whole, who want absolutely unbridled access to their favourite stars. His upcoming documentary *Snervous* follows his Slumber Party Tour which took him around the U.S, the UK, Ireland and Australia. You may well wonder how in the world can a YouTuber go on tour. Tyler attempts to explain. "It was a chance for me to go all over the world where my viewers were, to go to their home towns, bring my living room along, put it on the stage, and kind of have an interactive video moment with them. It's a chance to tell different stories, have special guests and have a lot of audience participation."

In countless instances, this is a chance for Tyler to meet fans who have been watching him, messaging him – and to whom he has written back – for years. "To finally meet them, it's just as much for them as it is for me. It's like an opportunity for me to recognise these people that I spend all day tweeting with. They would introduce themselves with their Twitter handle, and I would know exactly who they are and





the conversations that I've had with them."

Unlike the videos he shoots in his living room though, Tyler has not directed *Snervous* himself.

Is he worried about what he'll see when he watches it back? "I'm only nervous because there are parts of it that I think are really honest and true and raw, and real moments that I think a lot of YouTube viewers are not used to seeing in some of their favourite creators. But it's important for me to show those sides."

Tyler refers to himself as a 'creative', but in giving so much of himself to his viewers, I have to wonder if 'artist' is a more appropriate description; despite its traditional association with more lofty endeavours. One inspiring anecdote from *Binge* occurs when Tyler bumps into a man who had turned him down for a job at Google five years previously. He explains, "You were too creative, and as much as you were the perfect fit for Google, Google wasn't the perfect fit for you," he tells Tyler. I suggest this was something of a full circle moment, and Tyler agrees. "Not getting that job was the worst thing in the world at the time but it actually got me to where I am today, and I'm so grateful."

The world is his oyster, but Tyler maintains that no matter how far he pushes the frontiers of online fame, he will never neglect his original format. "Even if some day I have like, a deal or another opportunity, I would hopefully still want to come back to my living room and talk all about it with my people."

TYLER OAKLEY'S BOOK *BINGE* IS OUT NOW, PUBLISHED BY SIMON & SCHUSTER. HIS DOCUMENTARY *SNERVOUS* WILL HAVE A LIMITED CINEMA RUN IN DECEMBER, WITH A DIGITAL RELEASE SHORTLY AFTER.

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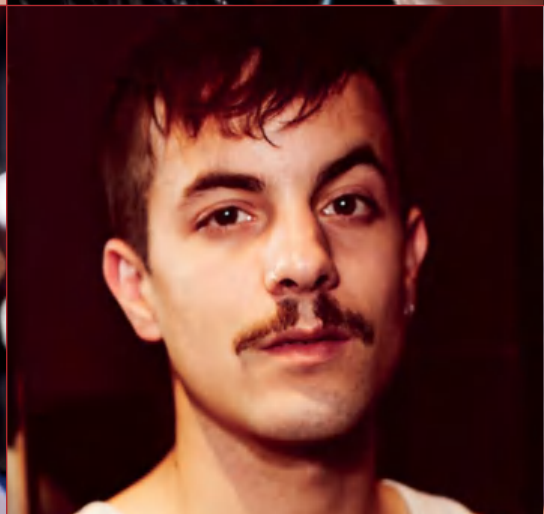
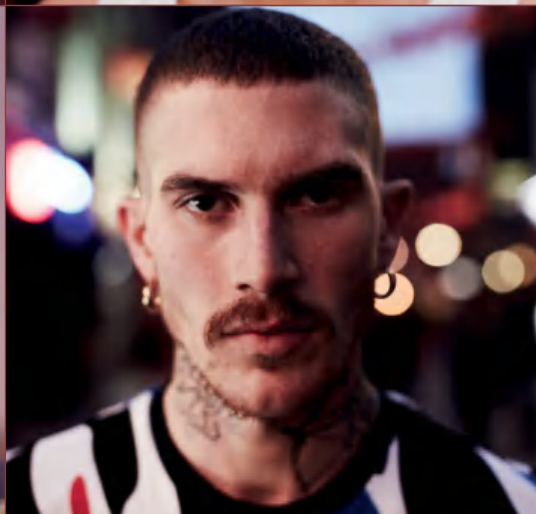
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LET'S TALK ABOUT GAY SEX AND DRUGS





NEXT MONTH A NEW DOCUMENTARY *CHEMSEX* REVEALS THE HARMFUL AFFECTS THAT A NEW WAVE OF DRUGS ARE HAVING ON A SIGNIFICANT MINORITY OF US.

HERE, COMMUNITY ACTIVIST PATRICK CASH AND A GROUP OF LONDON MEN SPEAK HONESTLY ABOUT THEIR EXPERIENCES OF A SITUATION AT CRISIS POINT.



WHEN DO DRUGS BECOME A PROBLEM?

MATTHEW TODD, EDITOR

Some think when they are used at all. Others, when people lose control or when they cause serious harm. Some people passionately believe that drugs are rarely a problem, that they are just fun and any discussion of them causing harm is right wing nonsense.

On 4th December Peccadillo Pictures release a documentary by Vice called *Chemsex* which examines the growing numbers of gay and bisexual men who are getting into serious trouble using three specific drugs – mephedrone, crystal meth and GHB/GBL.

Most gay men do not use illicit drugs and a smaller minority use these three but there is no doubt that there is a serious problem for a significant amount of men. Every agency I have spoken to tells me they have seen a dramatic increase in the numbers of men presenting to them with harm from drug use. Indeed, over the last few years I've seen growing numbers of people I personally know in dangerous or severely distressing situations because of their drug use. At the same time

rates of HIV and hepatitis C diagnoses are going up.

What I am certain is that this is an issue which needs to be talked about. We gathered together 18 men to talk about their experience of drug use and then did individual follow up interviews. None of us are in a position to be judgmental about this. Indeed, I have huge admiration for these men for speaking so honestly and openly. We also have contributions from GMFA, London Friend and DJ Fat Tony, who tells us how he went from being a serious addict to not using at all, something, which has transformed his life. It's important to know that there is help available should you need it.

We will be telling these guys' stories in more depth throughout November online at attitude.co.uk. I want to hear from readers whose lives have been touched by drug use in confidence. We need to discuss these issues and help stop people from experiencing some of the things some of these men have.

Please read this month's editor's letter and get in contact with me at matthew.todd@attitude.co.uk



**PATRICK CASH
ON GAY
SEX AND
DRUGS**

Three years ago I was living in Paris when one of my gay friends went back to London for a funeral. The guy who had died was young, in his twenties, and had choked on his own vomit at a house party. He'd passed out on a drug called G. When his boyfriend found him, he was no longer breathing.

I knew most of my gay and straight friends took drugs of some kind or another, but this was the first time I'd heard of a death. It was shocking, but I thought it was a one-off tragedy.

It was only when I came back to London and began working for gay nightlife magazine *QX*, that I realised this kind of incident was not infrequent at chillouts – house parties where men take drugs and have sex.

It's not as if drugs are a new thing for gay or straight people. What has changed is the particular drugs being used: mephedrone, crystal meth and GHB/GBL (or G), or as one academic I interviewed called them, "the unholy trinity".

Mephedrone is snorted as a powder. £20 for a gram, it's as cheap as three double vodka and cokes and keeps the user going far longer. It's a stimulant that removes inhibitions and can often be a gateway to its two headier siblings.

Crystal meth was made famous by *Breaking Bad*, but on the gay scene we've nicknamed her 'Tina'

or 'T', which makes the drug sound far less meaner. Smoked from a glass pipe, or injected straight into a vein, some say it makes sex unimaginably good. Prices vary, but can include your teeth (it's highly corrosive) and your sanity, as crystal meth use can often lead to psychosis and paralysing, painful come downs.

GHB/GBL is a clear liquid. Known as G, it is shot with a soft drink in millilitres, and must be measured accurately in carefully timed doses. Of course, as people get high, carefulness and accuracy become distorted. Too much G, and you 'go under', in spasm and twitching into a comatose state. G deaths have become a thing – if you can describe such an event with such a neutral noun – as the drug shuts down vital organs or provokes heart attacks. As *Attitude* went to press, 40-year-old Stephen Port from Barking was charged with the murder of four young men who, it is alleged, died after overdosing on G.

Writing about drugs is always difficult. Judging gay guys who are using drugs is not going to help us solve this problem. Yet, if I've taken a stronger tone than usual so far, it's because people in our community are dying on our doorsteps. We hear about it

in the news when it happens in saunas, because the sauna workers phone ambulances and the hospitals report the incident. In private homes, it slips under the media's eye. We asked the 18 guys interviewed for this feature if they'd personally known someone who had died from a drug overdose. All but two had.

"It's hardly as if drugs are a new thing. What's changed is the particular drugs being used: mephedrone, crystal meth and GHB. As one academic I interviewed for this piece called them, "an unholy trinity."

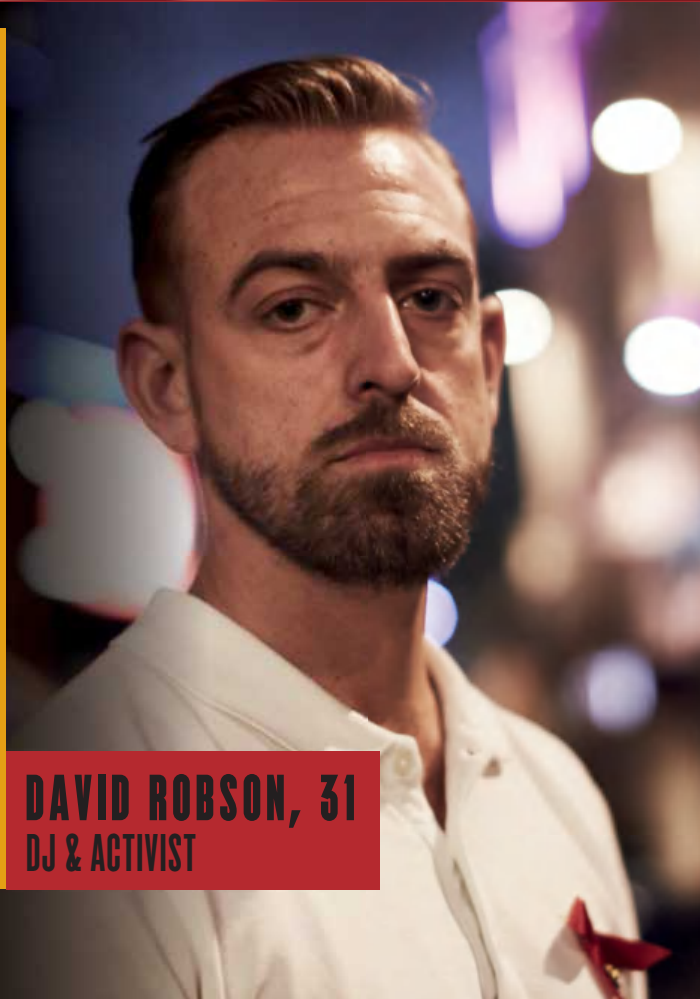


GREG OWEN, 35
WRITER & HIV PREP ACTIVIST

I couldn't narrow down where I got HIV from to be honest, but it would be chemsex.

In the last 12 months I know of at least 12 to 15 people who have died from drugs. People who I'd speak to by name. I lost 3 in one week. I don't want to give examples. They would no doubt be misconstrued and judged and in turn dismissed by shamers and pedants. I will say this though, I would not consider myself hysterical, nor part of the pearl-clutching bourgeoisie; I would say I'm the exact antithesis of that. But I am saying there is a problem out there. People who aren't really able to process what they're doing at this moment in time need help from their friends. They need to have someone to talk to without fear of judgement or shame. The reason why I'm not into chemsex right now is for the first time in three years I'm okay with my reality.

IWANTPREPNOW.CO.UK



I was late to the party and very anti drugs for many of my clubbing years. But as time went on and new drugs came about, it was more readily available to me through friends and iPhone apps. For me they went hand-in-hand with sex very quickly. Especially after I was diagnosed with HIV. That's when it really increased.

Don't underestimate their power when you are made to feel like a disease by your community.

Let's be honest, it's really hot for a time. I had some great experiences and that's why you go chasing it again. For that great shag.

Over the last year I have battled

paranoid psychosis as a result of excessive drug use. There's no feeling quite like it. The real fear that your life is in danger. I once ran from a guy's house (barefoot) in Vauxhall back to Clapham on a busy Friday night. My state of mind was hysterical but somehow I managed to get home without being hit by a car, or worse. That should have been a wake-up call, but it took several more for me to really snap out of it.

I want to tell people that they are not alone. There's so many services to help and support you. I love going to 'Let's Talk About Gay Sex And Drugs'. What's great is that there is no judgement. It's refreshing to be part of something where gay men are actually looking after one another. We have to. No one else is going to do it for us. This is a community call to action. I'm not saying become a nun. Just be informed in your decisions and know what you're playing with.

DAVID ROBSON, 31
DJ & ACTIVIST

One said he knew three people who died in one month. We can't continue to tiptoe around the truth.

✱

"I first became aware of chemsex in 2001, when I was using crystal meth myself," says David Stuart, now Substance Use Lead at sexual health clinic 56 Dean Street, who features heavily in the *Chemsex* film set for release in December, "It was before Grindr had been launched, and a small but significant international network of crystal meth and GBL users (known as "Crystal Clubbers") met up in sex-on-site venues and in people's homes."

David eventually stopped drugs himself and wanted to use his newfound sobriety to help others. He began volunteering at Turning Point's LGBT drug service Antidote, now run by London Friend. In 2006/2007, the service was overwhelmed with the number of guys reaching out with serious problems from using drugs.

"Such large numbers that it completely transformed the nature of our work," states David. "One of the main problems for guys who get into chemsex would probably be how quickly they lose the ability to have enjoyable sober sex. Other effects on their lives are: missing days at work; feeling exhausted and emotional all week; plus the dramas associated with unpleasant highs toward the end of the 'bender'. Paranoia can be seriously traumatic. Then there's the way it dominates people's weekends as they lose touch with friends and families."

And where sex and drugs are involved you can often find an uninvited guest, galloping in bareback to join the party: sexually transmitted infections such as HIV and, also now, increasingly, hepatitis C.

"It's very hard to adhere to safe sex practices when in the grip of these very powerful, sexual

disinhibitors", says David.

"Approximately 3,000 guys per month come to 56 Dean Street with the sexual health consequences of chemsex.

Finding a definitive correlation between HIV infection and chem use presents a number of practical challenges for academic researchers, but the work is underway to accrue it."

In 2014 Dean Street took the unprecedented step of appointing David to help them cope with the problematic drug use of their clients, and he now travels around the country to train other services. Brighton, Manchester, Glasgow, Birmingham... The list goes on. This issue is not confined to the capital.

✱

There may be gay drug users reading this piece who are angry. 'That's not me, they'll be telling themselves. 'I can control my drugs.'

I was back in Bristol last Christmas, and out with old friends. After one too many ill-judged jagerbombs, Grindr was whipped out and quicker than you could say 'Hot Vers, 32' I was in a taxi heading out of the city centre.

But when I got there, we didn't have sex. I asked to take a sip of water from the mug on his bedside table and he said:

"Not that, that's got my blood in it!"

That's when I noticed the syringes.

He'd been injecting mephedrone. Colloquially, it's called slamming, and some guys also do it with crystal meth.

With snorting or smoking you lose some of the drug, but with injecting you get the full force. Injecting these substances can spectacularly damage the veins in your arms, and sharing needles creates an additional risk of HIV and hepatitis C infection.

I sat with him on his bed for a while, and listened to him speak of the ex-boyfriend he missed

MAXIMUS CROWN, 26 DJ & WRITER

Gay guys have been getting high and having sex since the dawn of time, but with the development of social media and apps like Grindr these things can now be quantified. I know of people whose lives have been completely ruined because of their addiction to drugs and sex. I've heard so many stories about people who have overdosed and died because they've either been too reckless or haven't been properly educated on the risks surrounding the substances they are taking and what they are taking. Everybody has things that they enjoy. Some people enjoy knitting, some enjoy car boot sales, and some people like to party and get high. What's important is moderation. Too much of anything is never a good thing. I'm 26-years-old, I know that someday the novelty will wear off, but for now I'm just living life.

DANIEL O'CONNOR, 27 ADMINISTRATOR & WRITER

I believe it is becoming more common and people are becoming desensitised to the sight of it. I have all too frequently seen bodies checked to see if they're cold and dead. I've seen a friend enter a coma. I've had a friend need resuscitation. It's a real problem, but provided we remain calm and tackle it mindfully, there needn't be a panic. This isn't a new problem, but its face has changed. Talking about it openly is the only way to overcome or handle it.



PAUL FLEMING, 43
WORKS AT POSITIVE EAST CHARITY

We don't think any of our service users will die from HIV anymore. But we do think many might die from chemsex.

For some people it's perfectly manageable, you do it Friday night and then Monday morning you're perfectly well for work. The danger is, for a lot of people, it isn't.

POSITIVEEAST.ORG.UK



MITCHELL MARION, 28
FILM MAKER & CLUB HOST

I don't see hysteria in the media. I believe the discussion needs to be brought much more to the fore of the LGBT community's mind. Especially in London. One of my closest friends had to leave London because he couldn't control his partying; he started attending more and more sex parties and graduated from meph and GHB to slamming and crystal. Luckily, he was able to see that he was going too far and so he removed himself from the life he had made. However I see no cause for 'moral panic'. From what I see, most guys who take drugs, party, or have sex on drugs, do so without it affecting their day-to-day lives. On the other hand, there is a growing population of guys who are succumbing to living just for the sex party lifestyle, and that can be very dangerous. That's why we need to keep the discussion going - to make sure we are looking out for each other.

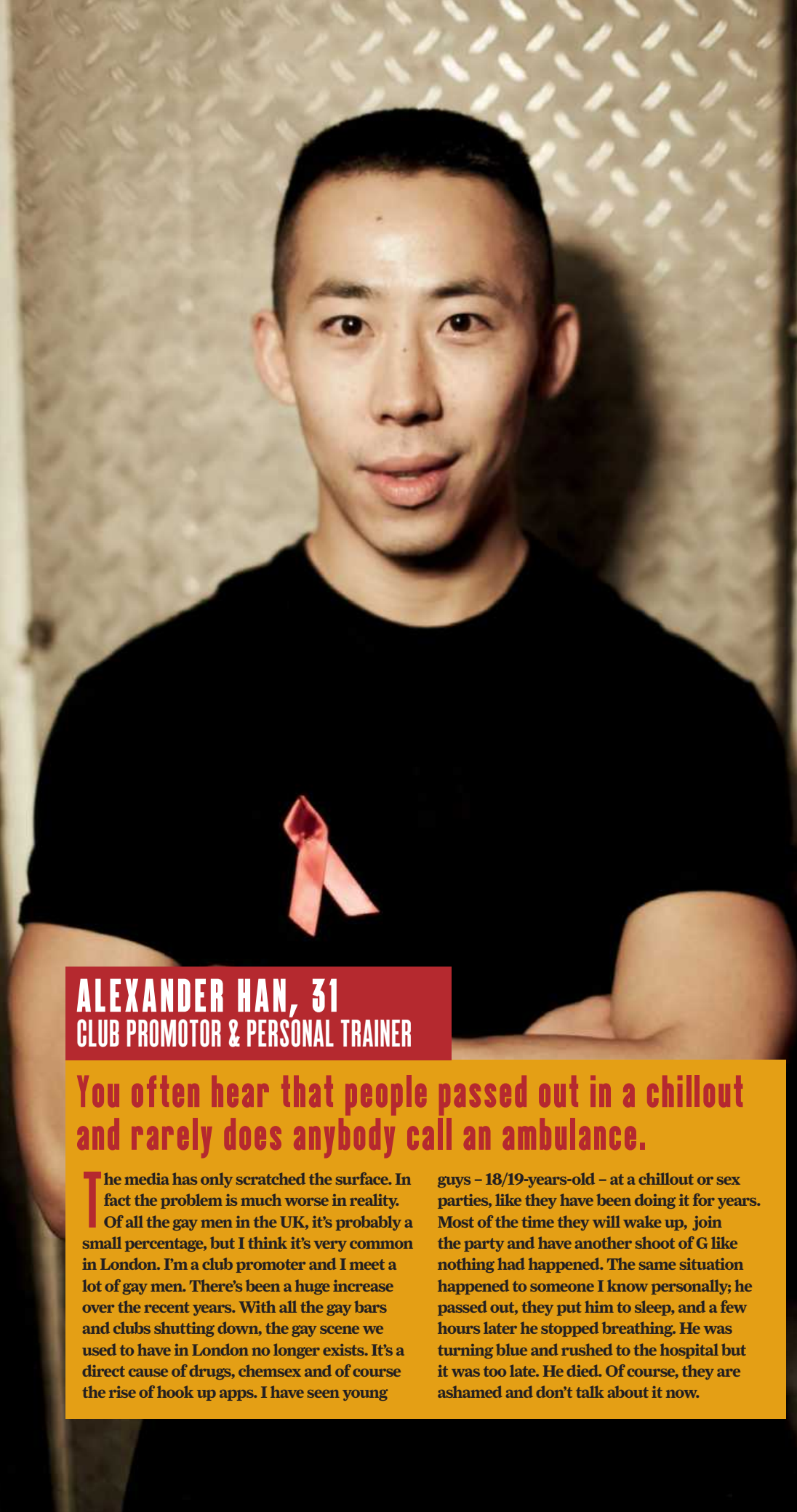
MITCH'S FILM *6 O'CLOCK* CAN BE SEEN SOON AT FILM FESTIVALS.
MITCHELLMARION.COM

ADRIAN HYYRYLAINEN-TRETT, 36
LIB DEM & LGBT ACTIVIST

Some people on the scene are able to manage it better and would prefer it if it wasn't discussed openly, but they are not thinking of the harm that a substantial percentage of the community are coming to.

There have been times where the situation may not be all as it seems - I can think of at least five different occasions where the person obviously had other motives. I do believe that there are men who are so unhappy with their own lives that they are willing to meet other men with the intention of doing harm. Some people may suggest that's just paranoia from the events I've been through. In my own personal experience, I've had someone deliberately seek control and knock me out on several occasions with different men. Some men take pleasure in seeing people in a state of unconsciousness. I don't know why this is, but having experienced their reactions when you come round, it's often them being angry and unkind, and they ask you to leave. They have no compassion for you after you've perhaps thwarted their attempts, or they've not achieved what they set out to do.





ALEXANDER HAN, 31
CLUB PROMOTOR & PERSONAL TRAINER

You often hear that people passed out in a chillout and rarely does anybody call an ambulance.

The media has only scratched the surface. In fact the problem is much worse in reality. Of all the gay men in the UK, it's probably a small percentage, but I think it's very common in London. I'm a club promoter and I meet a lot of gay men. There's been a huge increase over the recent years. With all the gay bars and clubs shutting down, the gay scene we used to have in London no longer exists. It's a direct cause of drugs, chemsex and of course the rise of hook up apps. I have seen young

guys – 18/19-years-old – at a chillout or sex parties, like they have been doing it for years. Most of the time they will wake up, join the party and have another shoot of G like nothing had happened. The same situation happened to someone I know personally; he passed out, they put him to sleep, and a few hours later he stopped breathing. He was turning blue and rushed to the hospital but it was too late. He died. Of course, they are ashamed and don't talk about it now.

and of the job he'd lost, and he kept repeating, like a mantra:

"If you'd told me a year ago I would be slamming every day, I'd have laughed in your face."

Finally, before I left, I asked him:

"What would make you happy?"

He dragged on his fag, blew out a plume of smoke.

"I honestly can't answer that."



"The fundamental fact remains that gay men are looking for sexual contact and apps enable that," says Dr Adam Bourne, from the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine. "What perhaps makes this latest development different is the immediacy of sex that apps facilitate. Chemsex can be so visible on some mobile apps, which give the impression that it is more commonplace than it really is. But we have to remember that the majority of gay men don't use drugs, and don't use them during sex."

Remembering this can be hard on a Friday night after a couple of drinks, when everyone you contact on an app seems to have 'three guys here, just chilling'.

If you cave in you can inevitably lose forty-eight hours, a fair amount of money up a sore nostril, and experience those dark comedown thunderclouds on 'mournful Monday' and 'suicide Tuesday'.

I ask Adam if peer pressure contributes to drug use.

"I think that when people believe a behaviour is 'normal', they may be more tempted to try it for themselves.

"When you find yourself within friendship networks where lots of people engage in chemsex, it can be hard to have perspective. Where this can be a real problem is when guys find their drug use is becoming a problem and want to step away from it," he says.



"If you have been an oppressed minority you are more likely

I had two men come over, knowing that I was okay with IVDU [intravenous drug use]. They kept trying to get me to inject crystal meth; which was a line I did not want to cross. I had dabbled and found it to be a drug that was really incompatible with me – making me extremely suicidal after use. They persisted and I foolishly allowed them to prepare my ‘slam’. They reassured me it was just mephedrone but then admitted when they were injecting me that it was crystal meth. They then suggested ‘blood-slamming’, in which each person would prepare their injection, draw back by means of filling the syringe with blood, and then withdraw the needle and pass it to the left in a circle. I’d never have considered such a thing in a sober setting, and looking back on this it shocks me that I did it. Nevertheless, add crystal meth and a bit of coercion and there I was, knowing I was putting myself at huge risk of contracting hep C. Turned out, that would be the night I got it. I was traumatised by the stigma and the threat of this diagnosis drove me deeper into the hard-drug scene before starting a long and difficult treatment. Luckily for me, the difficulty of the treatment pre-empted me to recover from drug-use. I’m not sure this would be the case for everyone though.

DUNCAN HAMILTON, 25
STUDENT PSYCHOLOGY RESEARCHER

to be exposed to all kinds of psychosocial health risks,” says Dr Qazi Rahman, Senior Lecturer at the Institute of Psychiatry, King’s College London. “We know this from lots of the research on the role stigma plays in the health of minorities more broadly. So, I think stigma against sexual minorities plays a role [in substance misuse].”

Where we first encounter stigma about homosexuality, depending upon our backgrounds, might be at home. Religion may play a significant part in this. In schools we were largely invisible. Many of the men in our group discussion grew up under Section 28.

Introduced by Margaret Thatcher, Section 28 forbade the promotion of homosexuality in schools and stayed in law for fifteen years. Teachers would not even mention homosexuality out of fear of being sacked. Repealed in 2003, its legacy still lingers around the education system,

and a campaign to introduce same-sex relationships and sex education in schools (SRE) faces stiff opposition. As one of the guys interviewed said, he learnt all he knew about gay sex from porn and Grindr, which delivers unrealistic expectations and pressures.

Then there is homophobic bullying.

Even if you were lucky enough to avoid being directly targeted, it’s unlikely that you didn’t hear ‘That’s so gay’, or ‘You’re so gay’. And our sex is always the butt, for want of a better word, of the straight world’s jokes. ‘It gets better’, states the campaign, but perhaps for some of us, there’s still that sense of difference lingering into adulthood.

“Drugs often serve to distance people from their worries

and concerns,” says Dr Adam Bourne. “They can have a very significant psychological effect where men describe how drugs can help them escape feelings of low self-esteem, concerns about their appearance, their sexual performance, their HIV status, or even how they feel about themselves as gay men.”

Loneliness was a constant in the discussions I have had with men involved with chemsex.

One man, who tested HIV positive after using drugs for sex, told me, “I was using the drugs and sex to get company, using it to not be alone. At some point, sex didn’t matter anymore, it was being with someone.”

Is this at the heart of this kind of drug use? The men searching through the steam of the sauna;

the men dancing in little shorts at the chillouts; the men having endless sex only stopping for shots; the men always on Grindr looking for something else? It seems so many of us are looking for something we don’t seem capable of finding. What is it we are looking for?

“My experience working with the chemsex syndemic leads me to believe that it’s closely associated with a challenging relationship with sex and intimacy,” says David Stuart. “And I believe that’s been complicated by 30 years of a traumatic HIV epidemic, that associated our sexual and romantic pursuits with risk, danger and disease, very deeply. Additionally, the overnight switch from real life socialising to online hooking up robbed us of a very important skill set, that involved forming bonds and intimacy before the sexy stuff happens.”

56 Dean Street, an NHS clinic,

“I was using the drugs and sex to get company... Using it not to be alone. At some point, sex didn’t matter anymore, it was being with someone”

MANRUTT WONGKAEW, 36 STYLIST & ART DIRECTOR

I had an on-off relationship with chemsex for about 8 years.

It was my coping mechanism as I sought external validation to compensate voids within me. These voids stem from bullying, constant rejection, and sexual abuse. Ironically, chem sex led me to further isolation and drove me even further away from the intimacy I have always been yearning for. I noticed how slippery the road I was on was. I did not reach my rock-bottom but I do not need my rock-bottom to initiate change. The evidence I saw in front of me, my life, and my health was vivid, prominent, and realistic enough for me to change and ask for help. I have now obtained over 8 months period of abstinence and I voluntarily run a small group support. I also share my stories to many groups at drugs and alcohol services hoped to raise awareness and inspire others who share a similar past or considering change to step into a positive future enough for me to change and ask for help.

@MANRUTT



CHEMSEX FILM REVIEW

BY PAUL FLYNN

4/5

Chemsex is, a harrowing, bold documentary that turns an anthropological lens on a niche-within-a-niche gay subculture. It reflects the bluntest end of a 25 year shift in British drug culture, from hands-in-the-air ecstasy to something suggestively more macabre. It concentrates exclusively on gay group sex sessions, where day and night has no boundary, driven mostly by GHB, intravenous crystal meth and mephedrone. The film unlocks the door at the most psychologically troubling end of proceedings. By any other name, it is a horror movie.

The feral clips of real-time

behaviour, sourced from within, tell a nightmarish story of everyday annihilation. In this respect the film probably shares more in common with 2015's other startling addiction piece, *Amy*. The only real snatches of redemption appear in a Florence Nightingale-ish figure, 56 Dean Street's David Stuart, traced throughout. His is a lone voice.

This raw take on tricky subject matter feels both new and oddly familiar. A work of Chemsex's nature is only ever as good as its groundwork research. On this matter, it is a triumph. The film has plenty of access. What it does with that access is likely to prove more divisive and contentious,

exhuming a narrative that is ghostly, repetitive and one some may find ghoulish or hectoring. It is more about what happens within the subculture than why. Both the sex and the chems are filmed unforgivingly, climaxing in a real-time episode of intravenous crystal meth psychosis. The soundtrack makes this microcosmic subculture feel like *Jaws*.

Yet when it sparkles, the film is full of firey new material. The sauna owner scanning the CCTV panels of his office, jotting off the pickpocket, the voyeur, the sex pest and the cheat; the HIV denier who has worked himself into a heart-breaking frenzy of

misdirected online information and stopped taking his meds; the inability of some men to see their worth beyond being a vessel to accommodate extremes of human consumption. These are cautionary tales. *Chemsex* may prove worthwhile for a generation for whom legal highs are sold below the counter at local newsagents and whose parents, teachers, pastors and politicians come from a generation of Acid House users who still think drugs = joy. It might just extend their peripheral vision, providing a prompt to start asking questions about the often invisible line between action and consequence. Films about drug addiction can do that. It is their purpose. This one documents something real and serious happening amongst a significant number of gay men. It is a wake up call.

CHEMSEX IS RELEASED BY
PECCADILLO PICTURES ON DECEMBER
4 WWW.PECCAPICS.COM

I would have sex with anyone and everyone because my self-esteem was so low.

The connection between drugs and sex didn't really start until after my first relationship ended. He'd introduced me to mephedrone, Vauxhall, saunas and chillouts, and once I was on my own I was like a kid in a candy store. It's all shame. Growing up in a heterosexual world – regardless of new legislation – is a psychologically difficult process. We are shown the gold standard of how to live your lives every day in the media, the perfect couples, together forever, with beautiful children and lives and jobs, etc. It's all unhealthy and somehow the gay community has tried to conform to that. I don't believe striving for such 'perfection' is healthy for heterosexuals, let alone homosexuals.

We end up splitting ourselves into two factions: the good gays who marry, have kids, don't do drugs and are as heterosexual as is possible to be without actually being it, and the bad gays who say fuck it and go on chemsex binges every weekend to escape from the fact that they feel inadequate.

All these expectations on ourselves are not helping us to achieve happiness. Encouraging people to be safe and listening without judgment is the only short-term solution. In the long-term we need to find ways to alter the way we treat each other and ourselves as a society.



DENHOLM SPURR, 26,
ACTOR & DIRECTOR

@DENHOLMSPURR



PETER STEVEN WILSON, 23
DJ & PRODUCER

The paranoia is the one that I found absolutely devastating. It's utterly irrational and it's like having someone hijack your brain.

I didn't trust anybody, I would be suspicious of my mother and brother. Having that internal dialogue was an identity crisis. I stopped drugs three months ago and am much better now. I first did drugs at Glastonbury 2010. I was up for three days, lost a shoe and woke up in someone else's tent. It was amazing. When I compare that to my drug use now it's a different ball game. I've been at risk and so have others. My dealer used to drive us around high and one time he let go of the wheel to see what I would do. I've stopped friends from walking into cars because they were wearing sunglasses in December and couldn't see shit. I stopped in May 2013 until December 2013. I started again because a guy I really wanted to sleep with would only have sex when he was high. My off switch for drugs is to simply delete Grindr and give my flatmate parental control over it. This stops me using. This time last year I was hospitalised twice due to drug induced psychosis and assault, so since June this year I've been in recovery.

@PRINCEPERSONA

offers psychosexual therapy, motivational interviewing and with its wellbeing programme, is simply trying to help gay men have something else to do with their time. And, of course, there is David and his team on-call to expertly help chemsex patients, and the CODE clinic specialising in chemsex. Taking the chemsex intervention model around the country has meant that some major cities' sexual health clinics popular with gay men now have training for drug use. Although, sadly, not all.

David cites prejudice in social support as an obstacle to overcome.

"I've watched traditional drug services project prejudice onto gay drug users," he says. "I've watched sexual health clinics shy away from offering drug use support for various reasons that can often be described as

prejudice."

Dr Qazi Rahman advocates better social support too, aimed specifically at men who have sex with men.

"We might think about evidence-based psychological interventions designed to work with the thoughts and feelings that initiate drug use, as well as things like depression and anxiety," he says, referencing the greater prevalence of poor mental health predisposal amongst the LGBT community.

Yet what about the individuals experience?

People can get very defensive about their drug use, especially when those drugs might be comfort blankets for deeper-seated issues. In the group discussion, Oly told us that his club-born friendships evaporated when he gave up drugs. "It's like holding a mirror

up to someone," he said. Perhaps one of our biggest challenges as a community is to persuade ourselves to be honest about what we truly need, sexually and emotionally. Happily he told us that since getting sober he has made new friends away from drugs and clubs and reconnected with old ones.

"I think it's important that gay men are encouraged to reflect on whether the sex they're having on chems is what they really aspire to," says Dr Adam Bourne. "I'm not anti-drugs and I'm absolutely not saying

that guys engaging in chemsex are doing anything wrong. But I am saying that so many of

the men I've interviewed about this didn't actually seem to be happy with their sex lives. Reflection and contemplation is the first big step in behaviour change."

When Adam's department surveyed 14,000 gay men in 2010,

asking them about their ideal sex life, the most common response was wanting sex within a relationship that had a real emotional connection.

"For the first time on the gay scene, I found what I was looking for. Last night I felt love, compassion, empathy and joy in a room full of gay men all fighting similar challenges. All looking for similar things. Last night I finally accepted I am not alone"

I can switch Grindr on right now and see at least 20 profiles in a 2-mile radius proclaiming to be 'H&H' (high & horny).

In the worst periods of my crystal meth usage I was slamming the substance almost every day, but it was no longer to enhance sex – I was doing it by myself, at home. My bank account was always empty, I was drowning in debt. Even when I was going to be made jobless, I wouldn't stop this insanity. Another time I passed out on G, woke up in an ambulance, not knowing who I was, or where I was at. It felt like waking up from being dead – confused and scared. I remember crying a lot the day after. A few hours later I was back at it – taking more drugs, partying even more than before. I have known people who have woken up in a dark alley, with scratches on their face and blood coming out of their anus. I have known people who had to be taken to the hospital because they overdosed (I was one of them). I have known people who contracted HIV because they were careless and high, and while high they lost all of the healthy perspective they used to have on things (again, I was one of these people). I would often seek pleasure, but I wanted it in such grand portions that I secretly hoped I would get crushed under its weight. I can't speak for everyone, but it was definitely a cry for help in my case. I wanted things to get out of control; I wanted someone to see just how hopeless I was back then. We need to have a conversation about these issues; we need to educate each other about the real dangers that come with taking chems. We are all in this together.



ADAM SCHULTZ, 28
MASSAGE THERAPIST

"That ideal sex is often a million miles from what some guys are experiencing when using chems," he says. "Perhaps, if you do use chems, ask yourself if you are getting what you want from the sex you are having now."

But Adam also has another suggestion: education.

"Perhaps surprisingly, I actually think one of the priorities needs to be around helping gay men who choose to do drugs more safely," he says, referring to the overdoses and G deaths. "There are lots of guys who don't know enough about basic harm reduction – about dosing, timings, potentially dangerous interactions with other drugs or alcohol. The UK is a world leader in drug harm reduction, but we haven't previously focused on the drugs most popular with many gay men nowadays. Drug use isn't going to stop, so we need to provide the information to help men use them more safely."

*

"For the first time on the gay scene, I found what I was looking for," said a user named PJ on the Facebook page for an event I run 'Let's Talk About Gay Sex and Drugs'. "Last night I felt love, compassion, empathy and joy under one roof, in a gay venue, in a room full of gay men all fighting similar challenges. All looking for similar things. Last night I finally accepted I am not alone, I'm part of a sibling-hood, a unity and a group of many friendships."

I believe the real key to our nights popularity has been that we're about celebrating the inside - our thoughts and fears and dreams, as opposed to an over-sexualised scene that idolises the body.

"I feel like chems are a shortcut to intimacy," said a 20-year-old man I interviewed for a focus group earlier this year. "You take G or mephedrone and you're like lovers for ten years with the person you just met five minutes

ago."

At chillouts, guys often report these illusions of trust, respect and brotherhood. But bonds forged in narcotics are transient and fade with the high's ebb. Perhaps we need to look at creating these bonds in the real world – the bonds of friendship and community.

We come out of our schooling laden with our baggage of shame, wrapped in the ribbons of our sex and ourselves. We run away to freedom and the great, glittering gay scene of the city to find shame again. We judge one another for how we look, what we wear, what our bodies are like, our hair, our skin, how big we are, how small we are, how femme we are. The queen who can throw the quickest shade, the most vicious insult, is adulated.

As one guy said in our group discussion: "When did we go from being the bullied at school, to becoming bullies to each other?"

If drugs allow us to break down our defensive barriers, and connect with one another in a mirage of love, then maybe it's no wonder they hold such spellbinding power. Yet with 'Let's Talk About Gay Sex & Drugs', with community forums like Simon Marks' 'A Change of Scene', the pioneering events of David Stuart's Dean Street Wellbeing Programmes and the growing popularity of LGBT-specific 12 step groups like Alcoholics and Narcotics Anonymous, we are proving we can meet our needs from a reality of love.

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DOORS AT 7PM. ALL WELCOME TO
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ZACHARIAH FLETCHER, 26 ACTOR

As a child, I experienced sex before I was ready and in a damaging way. This gave me huge hang ups around intimacy and in the willingness, or indeed the ability to explore my sexuality.

For me I found drugs useful; they had practical applications. They helped me feel confident, forget the negative connotations I had with sex and be able to experience a heightened, if not completely true, sense of intimacy with my partner or partners. It took me some time to realise that using drugs to masquerade as dealing with deep-seated emotional issues was not the smartest idea, and it can lead to more problems. Recovery from drug addiction is a long process, but it's one that I am proud to say I'm on. I don't demonise people that enjoy chems. I still drink like a fish and smoke the occasional joint, but for me right now that's enough. I have seen too much damage done by the 'unholy trinity', M, G, or T, to be able to enjoy them recreationally.

NYASHA PARAGON LANGLEY, 31 LAW STUDENT & PERFORMANCE ARTIST

Shame is the underlying issue through all of this.

The reason you go back next week is because you're ashamed of what happened last week. Things have changed among us over the last five years. We have pulled walls down only to shut ourselves behind closed doors. Secondly, it's up to us, the older ones, to help out those who are where we were years ago. I noticed that drug use was a lot more common than I initially thought when friends that had been dead set against any narcotic started happily taking G and mephedrone. I think attitudes have changed towards those kinds of drugs; they are seen as harmless fun enhancers, and they are not. However, I don't know many people that do crystal.



DRUG USE + HIV MATTHEW HODSON, GMFA

Ten years ago fewer than 5% of gay men had ever used the trio of drugs that are now equated with chemsex (GHB, crystal meth and mephedrone). Nowadays, in most urban settings, you can't go on a dating app for more than a couple of minutes without someone asking you to join them for a 'high and horny' session. Gay men mixing sex and drugs are nothing new, of course. I'm from the Trade generation. A core group would go out every weekend and get completely trashed and ecstatic. At the time many people said that ecstasy was destroying the gay scene, just as they now say about chemsex drugs. The same pattern seems to get repeated with each generation, although each wave of drugs seems more perilous than the last.

It's likely that alcohol is still the drug that is most often responsible for people making poor decisions about their sexual safety – but it doesn't have the same disinhibitory impact as some of the other drugs that are now available. The kind of chems that are used in chemsex can create an illusion of invulnerability, as well as making you feel really horny and uninhibited. In terms of HIV risk, that's a really dangerous combination.

Dating apps and chem-fuelled sex parties mean that infections can be spread efficiently to large numbers of men in a very short time. The health risks of drug use go beyond just sexual health. Your heart, liver, bladder and kidneys can be seriously

damaged.

But there is no denying that the sexual health risk is considerable. There is a high risk of transmitting HIV, through unprotected sex or through sharing needles. If you're into epic party sessions with lots of partners the risk is further increased. HIV-positive men having long sessions may not be taking their meds and so their viral load will be higher. Because the sex you're having may go on for longer, there's a greater risk of trauma, which increases the chance of transmission. Plus there is the risk of hep C, which is transmitted through blood, often in group sex scenarios.

Last year 3,360 gay men were newly diagnosed with HIV. Some of these men became infected

because they thought they knew the HIV status of their sexual partner (and got it wrong), some because they'd had too much to drink and weren't taking care of themselves, and some because they'd lost all inhibitions in the midst of a chems-fuelled session.

To some people, the drugs are manageable and help them to have great sex. To others, they lead to a downward spiral that can ruin their lives. When GMFA talked to guys who were using chems, more than half said that they had tried to stop, citing reasons which included feeling and looking like crap, feeling depressed, financial concerns or the fear of losing jobs and relationships. For some it was the devastating wake-up call of a friend dying of an overdose.

ALEXANDER BOLSHAW, 28 WRITER & PERFORMER

Two years ago I overdosed on G. I woke up on a psychiatric ward. I'd died four times.

The first time I was brain-dead for four and a half minutes. When I woke up I couldn't talk or see properly. I woke up so physically fucked I couldn't even get out of bed without falling over. I'd spent 48 hours G-ing out, and I was placed on the psychiatric ward. It took me almost a month before I could talk properly. G fucked up my mind, my body and my emotional state. When I was in the hospital, before I could even talk, they took blood tests and told me I was HIV-positive. When I told my boyfriend about it he dumped me. My friends wouldn't talk to me. I spent weeks trying to physically control myself, and I watched every single person I knew and loved look at me like a stranger, because they couldn't comprehend what I was doing or what I was saying. And all I could do was to continue to take G to numb the pain.



JAMES GEORGE, 23 ACTOR & MUSICIAN

It was only when I accidentally stumbled on a chillout that things became messy. I couldn't believe that this existed and it swallowed me up instantly. My libido went through the fucking roof. But soon I couldn't imagine sex without them. It's pretty frightening when you realise that you're hooked – that you can't stop.

Every time I'd go, I'd tell myself that this time would be the last.

I'd tell myself that this time I would find a boyfriend and we'd rescue each other from the madness and never go back again. I very quickly descended into chaos and begun to think of mephedrone as the only route to happiness. I've always been

a fairly creative and social chap but I became extremely dispassionate about everything and stopped talking to most of my friends. I'm lucky they're still here. I'm horrified at the amount of opportunities that have slipped away because of mephedrone.

There have been countless times when I've narrowly escaped death on G. One moment was when I had been with a guy and we'd taken too much G. My memory blacked out and I woke again a couple of hours later. He had dumped me outside as I guess he didn't want a dead body on his hands. I was stark naked, completely disorientated, and wandering on top of the roof of a building. I was so messed up that my peripheries were completely warped and I was dangerously close to falling off. I understand why he left me, but it was a painful reminder that all-too-often we don't look after each other when things get hairy. It was terrifying.

DJ FAT TONY

ON HOW HE GAVE UP
DRUGS USING NARCOTICS
ANONYMOUS

Why did 12 steps groups like NA work for you?

For me, the therapeutic value of one addict talking to another is far greater than me going to see a doctor, or someone who's just done a degree in counselling. They haven't lived it. Everyone in that room [12 steps groups] has got exactly the same problems as you. It's not about judging. There's no one there that doesn't qualify to be there, and that's the beauty of it. You tell your story and everyone in the room identifies in some way or another.

What about people who believe you should try controlled use?

Controlled using just doesn't work for somebody like me. I can only talk from experience but there is no controlled using for someone like me. Do you ever hear people going out on a Saturday night saying, 'I've got some drugs from last week'? Do you hear that? No. Do those people exist? I only stop when everything runs out. How can you control something you're not in control of?

If someone's got a problem reading this, what would you say to them?

Go seek help. When you ask for help you're 95% of the way there. As soon as you are honest with yourself and other people you stand a chance. My life was so out of control; no one would ask me what time it was because they know I'd lie about it. Pick up the phone. There are over 360 Narcotics Anonymous meetings in London. They are all over the country. There are LGBT meetings full of gay people. There are so many

different fellowships – there's NA (Narcotics Anonymous), there's CA (Cocaine Addicts Anonymous), there's CMA (Crystal Meth Addicts Anonymous), which is the fastest growing fellowship at the moment in London. There are meetings just for LGBT people. You just need to reach out. If you have a friend who has a problem you can reach out and say, 'I love you but I think you have a problem'. You can plant the seeds in people. If they deny it then just love and support them until they're ready. Every borough in London has a drug drop-in centre. Get yourself a key worker. Tell them straight away that you need to go to rehab. It's totally anonymous. The beauty of the 12 step rooms is that they are completely

anonymous. The primary purpose is to help you get clean.

Is your life better now?

My life's amazing. I can't put it into words. I'm getting married. I'm in a monogamous relationship. I thought for someone like me that doesn't exist! Monogamy, what the fuck was that? Sex and drugs all went hand-in-hand for me. When I stopped drugs, sex took off, big time. I deal with it through the same way I deal with drink and drugs, through my twelve steps programmes. I won't have a drink or a drug today and I certainly won't cheat on my boyfriend. I'll be nine years sober in January coming. Before I got sober I didn't even dream I could make it to nine hours.

You're still a DJ, which means you work around a lot of drugs. How

do you do that without using?

The 12 steps help. Every time I go to work, I look at people and think I'm so glad I'm not a part of that; that I don't have to do that anymore. If I ever was to take a drink or drug again I'd go straight back to that place I finished in. I don't have an 'off' button. The 12 steps groups have saved my life. Nothing else would work for me. Rehab wouldn't work for me. It got me clean but it didn't keep me clean. As soon as I came out I started again. I thought I couldn't go back to London, or DJing, or that relationship. My answer was, 'I'm not going back to any of it; I'm going forward to it'. It's all about the future for me. If I keep today clean I know that tomorrow is going to be alright. *(Details of groups overleaf)*



MONTY MONCREIFF

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OF LONDON FRIEND WHICH RUNS ANTIDOTE — THE UK'S ONLY LGBT DRUGS AND ALCOHOL SERVICE

Some people say that all this talk of chemsex is media hysteria? What would you say?

Try telling the guys coming for support that it's all media hype; their stories speak for themselves. We see hundreds of guys each year seeking support through Antidote and their experiences follow very clear trends. I think there's a bit of a backlash either because this isn't on everyone's radar, or they're fearful that the entire community is going to be assumed to be engaging in chemsex. That's clearly not the case. It is still a minority of men, but what concerns me is the amount of harm that's happening within that group. It's hugely disproportionate.

People say 'straight people take drugs too'. What would you say is the difference with what is going on here?

Of course they do, but we know from official data, backed up by a lot of other research, that gay people are a lot more likely to be using – gay and bi men three times more likely than straight men, for example. What's different for me is the distinct pattern chemsex has followed, and the reasons that people are using. It's not like when people use at a club for a night out, or even going to an after-hours

club to continue. We're seeing use in mostly sexual settings, and things like slamming (injecting) happening, which just isn't part of, say, a night out taking coke or dancing on E. Chemsex is a very specific issue that feels more about belonging to something, about seeking intimacy and reducing anxieties about sex and sexual identity. It's why people are using that's different. Obviously sex on drugs can be lots of fun, but it gets much more complicated for some people, and that's when we see them seek help.

Are these drugs damaging people?

Yes, and much more so than what we've seen before in this community. Most people seem to manage drugs like ecstasy relatively well and most stop when their lives or jobs made it more difficult to carry on going out. Mephedrone and crystal keep you going for longer. People are topping up over a weekend and then, when they stop the impact of not sleeping for three days, it makes them edgy, and the comedown is horrendous for them. They're really struggling on a Monday, if they've even made it to work. G is causing some people to become dependent needing a medically supervised detox, sometimes in hospital. Slamming is causing abscesses and increasing HIV or




hepatitis risk. These are issues more typically associated with heroin and crack users, not many in the gay community have really used drugs which cause these harms before. Add it to the complex issue of sex, intimacy and identity and it's a very heady cocktail of issues to pick apart.

What can people do if they need help?

Firstly, seek help early, if you feel things are starting to get out of hand. It's much easier to avoid things getting worse. Make sure you also read up about the drugs and using more safely if you are going to use, especially about G, to avoid becoming dependent

or overdosing. Seeking support doesn't have to mean giving up; many people come to Antidote for help to gain better control about when they use and what they do when they're using, setting boundaries for how much, how long, what sex to have, etc. For those who do decide to stop we can help through relapse prevention. Antidote is a specialist service for LGBT people, but more and more local drug services and sexual health clinics are improving their knowledge and support for chemsex. In fact we've been very busy training them!

londonfriend.org.uk



“ I WANT SO BADLY FOR
PEOPLE TO REALISE
THERE IS AN
ALTERNATIVE WAY
OF LIVING ”

OLY INNES, 27
WORKS IN MUSIC AND EVENTS

At 26 I started getting very ill. The late nights and comedowns were catching up on me. I would get myself well again just in time for the next party, then I'd get sick again. Every week was a repeat of the last. I was sad and miserable and knew it was time to change things.

I began by quitting all the after parties. The habit of always carrying on the party after the clubs shut is a dangerous trap to fall into. I started by always making sure I went home before the clubs closed, before everyone would start talking about where they were going next. I did slip a few times, but when I started to see the benefits of sleeping more the fear of missing out passed quickly.

After a year I felt ready to take the next step and I started, very slowly, to go out totally sober. Before I would numb myself before I even left the house, so taking that first step into a club sober was terrifying. I was filled with anxiety but the feeling of accomplishment afterwards was so gratifying. You really start to feel like you can have it all when you go to a club, have a good night with your friends, leave when you've had enough and still get up early the next day feeling fantastic.

Drugs are everywhere in the nightlife world and when I'm offered them I've convinced myself there is no other option than to say no. But a good thing I found at the beginning was to remember what the outcome will be if I give in. One line is never enough; one bag is never enough; one after party is never enough; and then there's the shame spiral, the come down and the self-loathing to remember too.

If I'm out and I'm feeling awkward, bored or uncomfortable, and I wish I was wasted so I could let loose with everyone else, then I tell myself maybe it's nothing to do with me and maybe the place I'm at just isn't that fun and I take myself home.

Dealing with wasted friends isn't always the easiest thing in the world and I'm still trying to be more tolerant but it does grate on me. Usually I leave when the drunken 'I love you' and the deep and meaningful conversations start.

It's not easy and it wasn't only drink and drugs I had to give up. There are places I know I can't go because I know there will be too much temptation, and there were people that I had to stop hanging around with. But with all the things I lost from my old life, I

gained ten times more from my new life and those things are worth so much more.

I'm the happiest I've ever been in my life. Right now every aspect of my life is heading in the right direction and it's all a direct result of getting myself clean and sober. I feel totally in control of everything I say and do. I'm full of energy; I'm looking after my mind and body. I like to go out still but mostly now I try and do something creative every weekend. The biggest misconception from thinking about going sober is losing your social life, but with me it was the total opposite. I could go out every night if I wanted to because I'm never feeling hungover or on a come down. My moods are more stable now. I've become a very positive person and I've got my ambition back. Instead of distracting myself with partying when I'm down about something, I deal with the problem instead. Before I thought sober people were boring but it's ironic how exciting and varied my life has become since I stopped being a party boy. I want so badly for people to realise there is an alternative way of living. I know being clean and sober isn't for everyone but learning to go out without drugs for me has been life changing in more ways than I can explain.

NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS

www.ukna.org

Free, confidential, with a number of LGBT-specific meetings
Helpline **0300 999 1212** (10am — midnight)

ANTIDOTE

The LGBT drug use service from London Friend:
londonfriend.org.uk/get-support/drugsandalcohol
Helpline (offers advice wherever you are in the UK)
020 7833 1674 (10am — 6pm Monday to Friday)

56 DEAN ST

56 Dean Street is in Soho, London, W1D 6AE.
For ChemSex support call 020 3315 6699
chemsexsupport.com
deanstreetwellbeingprogramme.com

CRYSTAL METH ADDICTS ANONYMOUS

crystalmeth.org/cma-meeting/cma-meeting-search.html

LET'S TALK ABOUT GAY SEX AND DRUGS

facebook.com/LetsTalkAboutGaySexAndDrugs

WWW.LGBT.FOUNDATION, MANCHESTER

For advice **0345 3303030**

ARMISTEAD CENTRE, LIVERPOOL

liverpoolcommunityhealth.nhs.uk/health-services/sexual-health/armistead.htm

PAGE LGBT MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT

pacehealth.org.uk

020 7700 1323 (Mon — Fri 10am — 5pm)

ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS

www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk
0800 9177 650
help@alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk

SEX AND LOVE ADDICTS ANONYMOUS
slaauk.org

SEX ADDICTS ANONYMOUS
saa-recovery.org.uk

A CHANGE OF SCENE

Monthly discussion group of related issues
outside of bars and clubs
facebook.com/AChangeOfScene

HEPATITIS C SUPPORT
HEPC.CO.UK

READ:
Who Say's I'm An Addict?
By David Smallwood

The Velvet Rage: Overcoming the pain of
growing up gay in a straight man's world
By Alan Downs

Cruise Control: Understanding Sex
Addiction in Gay Men
By Robert Weiss

Gay Men & Substance Abuse: A Basic Guide
For Addicts And Those Who Care For Them
By Michael Shelton



EDITOR MATTHEW TODD
PRESENTING TO THE ROOM

LEFT: MARK ANDERSON AND
THE VIRGIN HOLIDAYS TEAM

attitude AWARDS 2015

IN ASSOCIATION WITH



HOLIDAYS

On 14th October we celebrated our fourth annual Attitude Awards, sponsored by Virgin Holidays, at the prestigious Banqueting House in London.
Here's how it went down...

PHOTOGRAPHER: LORNA ROACH



Once a year, we gather the great, the good, and the downright unpredictable beings of the LGBT community, alongside our many allies and friends, and celebrate the best of what has been achieved in culture, politics, sport, media, and community, all to benefit the Elton John AIDS Foundation. In addition to the red carpet glamour, the fancy food and wine, the speeches and performances, and the unveiling of our proudly produced awards covers, it's the only place where Vivienne Westwood educates us all on global warming for twenty minutes, and Ian McKellen's table become the new Taylor Swift squad goals. If *Attitude* didn't throw a bash like this to celebrate the best among us, who else would?



BOY GEORGE WITH MARILYN



FRANKIE BRIDGE



WINNERS AUSTIN ARMACOST AND JAMES HILL



VV BROWN WITH HOST ANA MATRONIC



JODIE HARSH



WINNERS YOKO ONO AND VIVIENNE WESTWOOD



WINNERS ANTHONY COTTON AND KEEGAN HIRST



MARC ALMOND AND WINNER HOLLY JOHNSON



ADAM LAMBERT
PERFORMING



DR. RANJ
SINGH

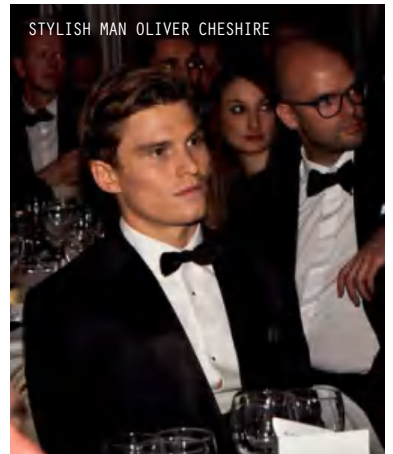


WINNER APRIL ASHLEY



MANAGING DIRECTOR OF VIRGIN HOLIDAYS,
MARK ANDERSON, ADDRESSING THE ROOM

PHOTOGRAPHER: PETE DAVIES



MENU

Beetroot Tartare (V)
apple, pickled spring onion, rye bread, bitter orange crumble and goat's cheese ice cream

Braised lamb shank
pearl barley, pickled baby carrots, tomato and red wine jus

Egg creme brûlée
egg shell filled with vanilla crème brûlée, a raspberry consommé and a fresh raspberry and basil salad with brandy snap shards.

WINE

Villebois
Loire Sauvignon Blanc 2014

Benjamin Darnault
Minervois
Plus Syrah 2014



ALLY WINNER
REGGIE YATES



ANDREW HAYDEN-SMITH WITH
DR CHRISTIAN JESSEN



WINNER ADAM LAMBERT



MARK GATISS AND MARC ALMOND



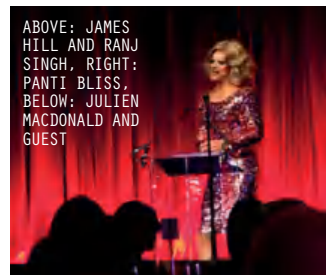
FLEUR EAST AND TULISA



WINNER CYRIL NRI



ANTONY COTTON (R) AND PARTNER PETER ECCLESTON



ABOVE: JAMES HILL AND RANJ SINGH, RIGHT: PANTI BLISS, BELOW: JULIEN MACDONALD AND GUEST



NEIL MILAN AND KATHERINE SPENCE WITH ENTREPRENEUR WINNERS PIERRE AND ADRIEN GAUBERT



WINNER LORRAINE KELLY (R) WITH HER DAUGHTER ROSIE



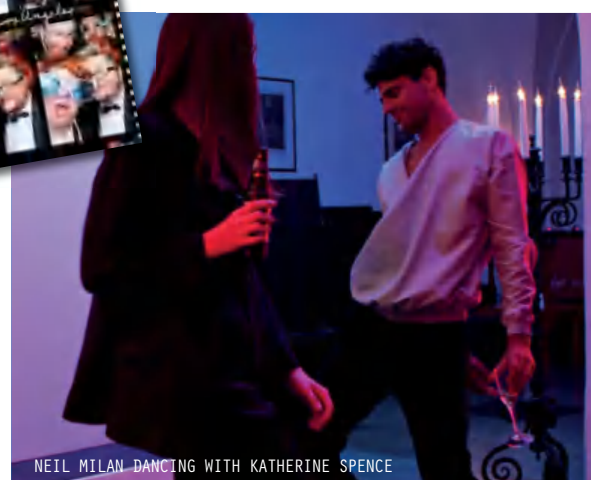
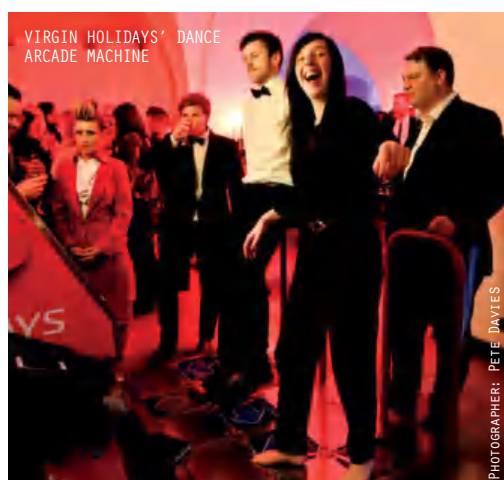
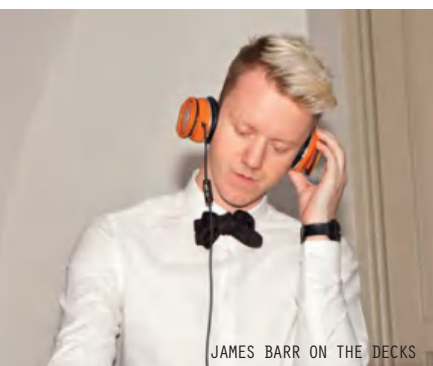
YOKO ONO WITH BOY GEORGE



ENGLAND WOMEN'S FOOTBALL HEAD COACH MARK SAMPSON AND GOALKEEPER SIOBHAN CHAMBERLAIN WITH SKY SPORTS REPORTER MARK MCADAM



THE AFTER PARTY...



Guests sipped on the delicious Los Angeles inspired 'Oscartini' at the lavish after party, before queuing up to show off their best moves on the dance arcade machine, and take snaps in the photo booth (with the help of many, many props).

THE WINNERS...

Man of the Year
Evan Davis

Music Award/International Album
Adam Lambert

Album of the Year
Years and Years

Actor of the Year
Cyril Nri

TV Personality of the Year
Antony Cotton

Icon Award for Outstanding Achievement
Holly Johnson, April Ashley, Yoko Ono

Music Breakthrough
Jess Glynne

Sexiest Man of the Year
Liam Payne

TV Moment of the Year
James Hill and Austin Armacost

Style Hero
Vivienne Westwood

Most Stylish Man
Oliver Cheshire

Media Recognition Award
The X Factor

Greatest Moment of the Year
Ireland's YES Vote

Honorary Gay
Lorraine Kelly

Young LGBT Entrepreneur
Pierre and Adrien Gaubert

Active Award
England Women's National Football Team

Politician of the Year
Mhairi Black

Ally Award
Reggie Yates

Book of the Year
Alan Cumming

Breakthrough Performance
Rebecca Root

Community Award
56 Dean Street

Legend Award
Alexander McQueen

Editor's Special
Keegan Hirst

+ THE GOODY BAG



ATTITUDE AWARDS ISSUE, BLK ALKALINE FULVIC TRACE MINERAL INFUSED WATER, BULLDOG ORIGINAL MOISTURISER FOR MEN, JACK BLACK PURE CLEAN DAILY FACE CLEANSER, HJ LUXURY COTTON SOCKS, USN PROTEIN DELITE BAR, MONOPOD SELFIE STICK, TESCO FINEST SWISS MILK CHOCOLATE TRUFFLES, DISCOVER LOS ANGELES LEAFLET, GLASS CLEANER AND LICENSE PLATE LUGGAGE LABEL, POPCHIPS CRISPS.



All eight covers of *Attitude's* awards issue 2015

10. Things to Do on a Sunday

1. Eat anchovies on a Chesterfield
2. Ask an Art Deco mirror your name
3. Lounge under a parasol and read Proust
4. Make every picture crooked
5. Leave very bad sonnets in random drawers
6. Lie under a table entirely sober in a turban
7. Fall in love with a swan
8. Go to Lots Road with clothes on
9. Bid for something you don't want
10. Buy back your grandmother

Lots Road Auctions
The Best Thing to Happen to Sundays since Church.

www.lotsroad.com

71-73 Lots Road, Chelsea, London SW10 0RN

LOTS ROAD AUCTIONS

T: +44 (0)20 7376 6800 E: info@lotsroad.com



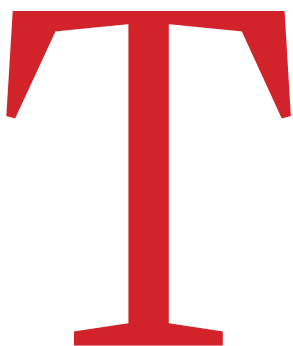
**'HAVE AS MUCH SEX AS YOU WANT,
AND ANY WAY YOU WANT TO HAVE IT,
AS LONG AS YOU'RE ACCOUNTABLE TO
THE PERSON YOU'RE ENGAGING WITH.
I DON'T THINK, FRANKLY, THAT'S A
CONTROVERSIAL THING TO SAY'**

**To mark World AIDS Day 2015, ZACHARY QUINTO talks
exclusively to Attitude about gay life, love and being
the worlds highest profile out actor.**

WORDS BY TIM TEEMAN

PHOTOGRAPHY BY VICTORIA WILL

FASHION AND CREATIVE DIRECTION BY JOSEPH KOCHARIAN



he eyebrows have been shaved to severe, angular Spock-ness. When Zachary Quinto and I met, on a sultry, overcast summer afternoon in the garden of a New York hotel, he was filming the latest *Star Trek* movie, *Star Trek Beyond*. He has since completed that, posting an Instagram picture on the last day of filming captioned “maybe the last time, maybe not”.

Having first found fame in the TV series *Heroes*, Quinto’s role as Spock has bought him to a huge, sci-fi loving global audience. He has also appeared in movies including *Margin Call*, and the gay-themed *I Am Michael* opposite James Franco.

When we met, Quinto looked as handsome as every picture you may have seen of him: tall, broad and muscular.

You will also see on Quinto’s Instagram account gorgeous pictures of himself and his partner Miles McMillan, on lovely holidays, sometimes in swimming trunks, always having fun. The tabloids regularly feature them looking adorable walking their dogs in New York.

Quinto, 38, who grew up in Pennsylvania, is one of the most famous out gay actors in the world; and one of the most eloquent and opinionated – as the controversy stirred by his saying there was a “complacency” among gay men around HIV in an interview with *Out* magazine last year revealed.

Quinto told *Out*: “I think there’s a tremendous sense

of complacency in the LGBT community. AIDS has lost the edge of horror it possessed when it swept through the world in the 80s. Today’s generation sees it more as something to live with and something to be much less fearful of. And that comes with a sense of, dare I say, laziness.”

On the availability of PrEP (pre-exposure prophylaxis, the new drug course available in the US to prevent HIV transmission, currently being campaigned for in the UK) and drugs like Truvada, Quinto said: “We need to be really vigilant and open about the fact that these drugs are not to be taken to increase our ability to have recreational sex. There’s an incredible underlying irresponsibility to that way of thinking... and we don’t yet know enough about this vein of medication to see where it’ll take us down the line.”

For these reasonable, insightful comments, Quinto was accused of slut-shaming.

Quinto came out in 2011, spurred to do so by the suicide of 14-year-old gay teenager Jamey Rodemeyer. He has used his fame to speak out and campaign, and in October received the Champion Award from the Gay, Lesbian & Straight Education Network. Next, he will appear as gay journalist Glenn Greenwald in Oliver Stone’s explosive *Snowden* and then in an off-Broadway family drama, the MCC’s *Smokefall* at New York’s Lucille Lortel Theatre, in February.

How do you feel about the controversy over your HIV/PrEP comments?

If people are talking about it and having conversations, that’s awesome. Performing in (Tony Kushner’s AIDS-themed play) *Angels in America* made me realise had I been born a few years earlier I would have been in the sweep of that epidemic, there’s no question

about it. So maybe there’s a proximity alert that goes off for me. I’m not trying to say people shouldn’t take PrEP, or that people shouldn’t have sex, or that sex isn’t amazing. It is. I’m just saying we should support each other and be responsible, whatever that means to you. I think it’s a matter of responsibility to oneself and to one’s community, and in honour of an entire generation of men who were lost. Have as much sex as you want, and any way you want to have it, as long as you’re accountable to the person you’re engaging with. I don’t think, frankly, that’s a controversial thing to say.

I think gay men and sexual responsibility is a touchy subject. People misread your words as censorious.

That is not what I am in any sense of the imagination, and I am not trying to adopt that platform. People said something about ‘slut-shaming’. I’m like, ‘Come on please, that’s absurd. I love sluts’. (Laughs)

Would you take PrEP?

Err, no, I haven’t thought about it. But I can’t say I never would. I don’t know the answer. For me it’s not something I’ve considered based on the conversations I have had and the decisions I have made. I don’t take prescription medication. I can’t remember the last time I took antibiotics. For me it’s not about this particular drug, but the pharmaceutical industry and corporatisation of it. That feels very separate to my well-being.

I agree with what you said. There’s touchiness around even the suggestion that gay men might want to think about the amount of sex they have, how they have it and why they have it. And now along comes a drug which seems like a kind of answer...

Which lowers inhibitions, yes. Where are the boundaries with ourselves and with

our partners, be they one or multiple? At least the conversation I have generated is being had. I am not moralising that one way is the right way. If you and your doctor think PrEP is the way to take care of yourself, then that is a very personal and private decision I respect. My concern stems more from a human thing. It’s more of an esoteric kind of like, ‘Where are we hurtling ourselves, into the abyss of connecting but not connecting?’ For me it’s more of a spiritual crisis, a human, collective, existential crisis.

How do you feel about World AIDS Day?

It’s still utterly essential, not just in marking the advancement, progress, and fight against the disease, but also cultivating knowledge and awareness of it for people all over the world. It’s easy in Western countries to disseminate information and have conversations about things, but when you get into parts of the world restricted by fundamentalist religious or societal religions or beliefs, the common conversation becomes crucial.

What is it like being the most high-profile out gay man in Hollywood, and a role model?

The only thing I care about in terms of my public persona, and I really want to cultivate in terms of that, is to help young kids that are really struggling in the LGBT community to whatever extent I can help them, serve their well-being and their greater potential. I’ve been really moved when I hear from younger people who don’t have the access or means to extricate themselves from what could be judgmental or oppressive environments. That they’re able to find some strength or perseverance in things I’ve said or put out there is always moving to me.

Where do you think the fight for LGBT equality is now? Legally, and in terms of



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AND AWARENESS OF IT
FOR PEOPLE ALL OVER
THE WORLD'**





JUMPER
BY LANVIN

marriage equality, it's been a staggering five years, but we have achieved that milestone. We have to continue to put pressure on county clerks who are deliberately and actively defying the ruling of the Supreme Court and not issuing marriage licences (like Kentucky's Kim Davis). Just a couple of weeks ago the first gay couple to graduate from (elite military academy) West Point were attacked in the bodega blocks near where I live. Bigotry isn't something that gets eradicated because of legislation, but legislation is a great tool and weapon for us to fight with.

You grew up in Pittsburgh. How was that as a young gay man?

I grew up in a pretty traditional, suburban environment. I was raised Catholic. I was an altar boy. I read in Mass. I went to a Catholic school. Obviously as a kid trying to come to terms with my own identity, it was challenging at times, because I was indoctrinated with this belief that being gay was wrong. Homosexuality was laden with judgements.

Did you try to be straight in some way?

Yes, I denied the curiosity and I denied the impulse. I would have occasional sexual fumbles with my schoolmates. At college I really didn't have sex. I just poured myself into my work and wasn't really sexually active. (Laughs) I missed some pretty important years. I was sort of tortured over it, but the torture was apt for drama school. This very creative place gave me different kinds of outlets to wrestle with it. By the end of college I came out to my best friend. I came out later to my family. I was terrified to tell my mom and brother, but they were absolutely supportive. My mom probably had unconscious challenges within herself in terms of accepting it, but we worked through it together over the next few years, and she has come to support me and my life.

And your faith?

I never went to church again after graduating high school. I value a lot of aspects of my Catholic education and upbringing, but also recognise the deep-seated, hypocritical nature of the teachings and the political and internal machinations of the institution. I do think it engendered a spirituality in me that I have cultivated and developed in different ways.

Can you describe how?

I think the path is still revealing itself to me in lots of ways, but I would say the most profound spiritual experiences I have had have been shamanic in nature and have

'LOOK AT THE AMAZING DIVERSITY OF PROJECTS I DO. I WAKE UP EVERY MORNING AND HOLD HANDS WITH MY BOYFRIEND WHEN WE WALK DOWN THE STREET AND NOT WORRY ABOUT PEOPLE SEEING ME. IT FEELS LIKE THERE'S A FREEDOM AND INTEGRATION, AND I CAN PURSUE AUTHENTICITY IN MY LIFE THAT IS ESSENTIAL TO MY HAPPINESS AND WELL-BEING. I JUST ENCOURAGE PEOPLE TO NOT DENY THEMSELVES THAT'

opened me up to a kind of earth spirit, and plant spirits that have taught me a lot. I don't know how that will continue to evolve, especially living in the urban jungle of Manhattan but...

Do you do it here?

No, I travel to South America and other places.

How have your relationships been?

I was naive about love. I felt like all I needed to do was come out and then I would blissfully find a relationship and live uninterrupted with the great love of my life. Needless to say that didn't happen in my early 20s, but it set me on a course to try and figure out what that means and why it wasn't presenting itself – and that took its own time and direction.

You seem very happy with Miles.

It's been over two years. We've just moved house and we're in the process of making it our own. (Laughs softly) I've infused a little more colour into the dynamic, Miles is very chic and likes simple browns, blacks and whites.

Are you thinking about marriage?

Marriage is certainly something we talk about. I'm thrilled now that we can, if and when we decide we want to, but I don't think it's something both of us are necessarily hurtling towards. I've never been happier. I've never felt so integrated and in place with

anyone else. That's what matters to me and that's what matters to Miles.

Would you like to marry?

I believe in the right to it, but personally I feel a union is something that transcends a declaration or institution. Maybe at some point I will want to bring marriage into the mix and Miles will agree. We certainly have conversations about it. The idea of planning a wedding – having a party and celebrating how much I love this man with the people I love – is exciting.

Do you want children?

I definitely want children. Miles wants children too.

How would you do it?

It's something I've given a lot of thought and consideration to. Personally, adoption is the strongest choice. It's a complicated issue and decision to make, I think. It requires a fair amount of planning and examination, so I'm in the middle of that now.

How has filming *Star Trek* been?

It's certainly different now Leonard [Nimoy, the original 'Spock', who died, aged 83, in February] is not with us any longer. I feel a sense of connection to him which is deeper than when he was alive, and a sense of responsibility to honour him, his legacy and role. Leonard and I were very, very close. He really left the world as peacefully and loved as anyone I have ever known.

SUIT AND SHIRT ALL BY
ALEXANDER MCQUEEN,
SHOES BY CHRISTIAN
LOUBOUTIN



How useful has therapy been?

I realise it isn't designed for everyone, but personally it feels a very valuable place to channel my resources of time, money and energy. Psychologically and emotionally I have felt more self-acceptance, love and compassion for myself when I have been in therapy than when I'm not, and more understanding of other people in any kind of relationship with me. I took responsibility for things like my father's death when I was seven. I think any child in the context of such profound trauma doesn't have the capacity to realise they were not somehow complicit in the trauma. You don't have any frame of reference for the magnitude of that, the absolutely explosive nature of an event like that at such an unformed age. In terms of relationships I needed to understand why under certain circumstances I was looking for something more than someone else was willing to give me and why under other circumstances why I wasn't able to give someone as much as they need. Going back to the origins of those behaviors allowed me to get to the point where I was able to be on the same footing as somebody else

How have you found fame?

I think I deal with it pretty well. I know what comes along with the exposure of being a celebrity. I don't begrudge or resent it. I have boundaries that are really clear. I walk my dog. I take the train. There are things I can do that make myself less available as I walk through the city. I listen to music, wear sunglasses on the train. I've learned how to manage the city in a way that doesn't necessitate me getting into a fucking SUV every time I walk out my front door.

Why does Hollywood still have such a 'gay' problem? Why are so few big-name actors out?

One journalist misquoted me saying that one day there could

be a gay James Bond. That was not the fucking point I was making. The point I was making was there could be a gay actor playing James Bond, who will never be gay. A gay actor can play James Bond as a straight character. Maybe the only way to really change it is to just fucking do it and fucking stop talking about it. That's the effort I'm making when I make a film like *Agent 47*, or an action film, or do something not about being gay, or playing a character that is not gay. I'm working in a more diverse and more consistent way than I did before I came out.

But there are still not many out gay big-name actors.

If you're an actor who's afraid of it, or think there's something you're not going to be able to achieve or accomplish [if you come out] then I have to disagree with you. If you don't want it to be part of the public conversation, I respect that. I do feel I am ploughing a lonely road, but I'm just trying to do something.

Do you think Hollywood is open to having more openly gay actors?

Yes, I do.

Then why aren't more actors coming out?

That I can't say. I don't know. Maybe there just aren't that many gay actors. (Laughs) I think the younger generation is already more out, and more gay actors are living as they are and going after roles they should get. I think it's becoming a less crucial conversation. I think it's going to continue to evolve. I think we'll all look back at this time and say how lucky we were to be a part of the evolution. I have no interest in dragging people out. If people are conditioned to live their lives based on what other people think of them, that's a really heavy way to live. On some level, it's really dark and unsatisfying to me. I just know I'm happy. I'm thrilled with the life I get to live.

TOP BY APC AT
MR PORTER



'I WAS NAIVE ABOUT LOVE. I FELT LIKE ALL I NEEDED TO DO WAS COME OUT AND THEN I WOULD BLISSFULLY FIND A RELATIONSHIP AND LIVE UNINTERRUPTED WITH THE GREAT LOVE OF MY LIFE. NEEDLESS TO SAY THAT DIDN'T HAPPEN IN MY EARLY 20S, BUT IT SET ME ON A COURSE TO TRY AND FIGURE OUT WHAT THAT MEANS AND WHY IT WASN'T PRESENTING ITSELF — AND THAT TOOK ITS OWN TIME AND DIRECTION'



I wake up in the morning and look at this man I love, and I just feel so grateful.

Have other gay actors come to you for advice on how to be out?

A couple, yes.

What did you say to them?

I just share my experience, and say, 'This is how it went down for me, this is how I feel'. I tell them, 'Trust that even if it means you're not as famous, or even if means it's not exactly what you thought it would be, it's still more valuable when you're assessing your life at the end of that'.

So, you're glad you came out in 2011?

Look at the amazing diversity of projects I do. I wake up every morning and hold hands with my boyfriend when we walk down the street and not worry about people seeing me. It feels like there's a freedom and integration, and I can pursue authenticity in my life that is essential to my happiness and well-being. I just encourage people to not deny themselves that.

('Looking' star) Jonathan Groff is an ex, right? Are you friends?

Oh yeah, totally. I saw him in [Broadway hit] *Hamilton* the other night. We were able to transition out of a relationship into a friendship pretty easily.

Do you bang out with other gay celebrities, like Dustin Lance Black?

I do know Dustin Lance Black.

I was friends with Neil Patrick Harris well before his amazing career took off. Jesse Tyler Ferguson and I have been friends for years. It's not about being gay celebrities; it's about being gay friends before we became the celebrities we are now. It's always wonderful, gay or straight, to see how much we have changed and evolved. I used to go to Jesse's tiny studio apartment for dinner. Now I go over to his house to swim in his pool. I feel so proud of my friends. We have come up together, and have come through these walls of resistance. Now we're in a place to celebrate all of who we are and the diversity of the work we're doing and not hide any of it, or keep any of it silent. That feels very exciting to me.

How is aging for you?

I feel a sense of surrender and gratitude for all things getting older. I take care of myself. I see my face changing, my body changing. Changes are inevitable no matter how much you work out or what you eat. I like to find a balance. I don't like to feel I'm restricting myself or enjoying life. I'm as vain as the next guy, but I don't let my vanity dictate the choices in my life, and I don't let my vanity dictate my sense of self-worth.

Would you have plastic surgery?

(Laughs) Today? No. At whatever time it is in the middle of New York in 2015, I could

never imagine a scenario where I would undergo plastic surgery, beyond plucking my eyebrows and whitening my teeth. That's the extent of it for me.

What comes next?

I'm playing (*Guardian* journalist) Glenn Greenwald in Oliver Stone's *Snowden* (set for a May 2016 release). I believe any citizen has a right to know they are being surveilled, watched, and intruded upon, and I believe that Snowden stood up for that in a way that required a tremendous amount of courage, sacrifice and perseverance and I respect that.

Should he face prosecution?

Not for me. We must ask where this wormhole of constant technological development is taking us. What are we hurtling ourselves towards, and why are we so willing to detach ourselves from what it means to be human? We give ourselves over to advancement and the mastery of knowledge, but what are the implications of that mastery, not to mention what technical advances have done to our environment. Maybe I'm more pessimistic-sounding than other people. I don't want to say there's no hope for humanity, I think there is. But I think ultimately it will be hard-won.

SNOWDEN HITS AMERICAN CINEMAS IN MAY 2016 & ON 15TH JUNE IN THE UK. *STAR TREK BEYOND* IS RELEASED IN JULY

1st DECEMBER IS WORLD AIDS DAY

• In the UK, gay/bi men have a disproportionate risk of contracting HIV. 9 gay/bi men test HIV positive every day.

• If you are HIV positive, on medication you can live a healthy life. It's vital to know what your HIV status is so you can start medication.

• Get tested at your local sexual health clinic. Find details at tht.org.uk or call 0808 802 1221.

• HIV positive people deserve love & respect like everyone else.

• It is easy to avoid catching HIV. There's no rule that says you have to have anal sex but if you

do, always use a condom and a water based lubricant (never oil based).

• Oral sex is low risk of catching HIV but increases if he cums in your mouth.

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PG.110

ALL CLOTHING
THROUGHOUT BY SPORTS
PHILOSOPHY, TRAINERS
THROUGHOUT BY PUMA

WORK HARD, TRAIN HARD

ATTITUDE MEETS 26-YEAR-OLD USN
AMBASSADOR LEE CONSTANTINOU
FROM LONDON TO TALK ABOUT
TRAINING WELL, EATING WELL,
AND THE SUPPLEMENTS THAT
HELP ALONG THE WAY.

WORDS: BEN KELLY
PHOTOGRAPHY: SIMON TAYLOR
STYLING: NICK BYAM

HOW DID YOU FIRST GET INTO FITNESS?

I WAS OUT OF SHAPE WHEN I WAS YOUNG, AND WHEN I WAS ABOUT 13 I STARTED GOING TO KARATE. I DEDICATED MYSELF TO THAT AND GOT TO BLACK BELT. THEN I WANTED TO DEVELOP MY PHYSIQUE FURTHER SO I GOT INTO THE GYM AND STARTED LIFTING WEIGHTS. I JUST LET IT BUILD INTO MY LIFESTYLE FROM THERE. IT'S SECOND NATURE NOW. I GOT MORE SERIOUS ABOUT IT AT UNIVERSITY, WHEN YOU'VE GOT TIME TO GO WORK OUT. I JUST KEPT IT GOING AND THEN STARTED GETTING MORE INVOLVED WITH THE FITNESS INDUSTRY AND COMPETING IN FITNESS COMPETITIONS AS WELL.

DID YOU HAVE A COACH WHEN YOU WERE FIRST STARTING OUT?

NO, I JUST TALKED TO PEOPLE WHO KNEW WHAT THEY WERE DOING AND STARTED READING A LOT AND GETTING INTO UNDERSTANDING THE SCIENCE BEHIND EXERCISE AND NUTRITION. I DID A LOT OF TRIAL AND ERROR WITH CLIENTS AND MYSELF. IT'S JUST A LEARNING PROCESS, AND CONTINUAL DEVELOPMENT OF MY KNOWLEDGE, AND TRYING NEW TRAINING SYSTEMS AND EXERCISES.

WHAT IS YOUR WEEKLY WORKOUT SCHEDULE?

I SPLIT MY TRAINING UP INTO 3 SECTIONS OF PUSH MUSCLES, PULL MUSCLES AND THEN MY LOWER BODY. THIS WAY, MY ENTIRE BODY IS GETTING WORKED OUT EVERY THREE DAYS AND I TRAIN FOR ABOUT SIX SESSIONS A WEEK. MONDAYS ARE PUSH SESSION, SO I'LL DO MY CHEST, SHOULDERS AND TRICEPS, AND THEN USUALLY A BIT OF HIIT TO OFFSET CALORIES AND KEEP ME LEAN. ON TUESDAYS I DO A PULL DAY OF BACK, BICEPS AND ALL OTHER PULLING MUSCLES AS WELL AS MY CORE. ON WEDNESDAYS I DO MY LOWER BODY. I CHANGE THE REP RANGES AS WELL. AT THE BEGINNING OF THE WEEK I DO LOWER REPS WITH MORE STRENGTH, AND THEN LATER IN THE WEEK I WILL DO MORE WITH HIGHER REP RANGES JUST TO TRICK MY BODY AND KEEP IT INTERESTING.

HOW LONG IS EACH SESSION?

QUITE INTENSE. AROUND 45 MINUTES TO 1HR 15, INCLUDING WARMING UP. IT'S QUITE COMPACT BUT IT'S REALLY EFFICIENT. I'LL ALWAYS HAVE A PLAN BEFORE I GO IN.

WHAT SORT OF MUSIC DO YOU LIKE TO WORK OUT TO?

ANYTHING THAT GETS YOU PUMPED UP. I QUITE LIKE WHEN AN EMINEM TUNE COMES ON BECAUSE THEY'RE QUITE HARD AND HEAVY. THERE'S ALSO A FEW GOOD HOUSE TUNES NOWADAYS. IT'S JUST ANYTHING WITH A HEAVY BEAT FOR ME. I LIKE MY MUSIC LOUD IN THE GYM BECAUSE THAT GETS ME GOING. I LIKE A LOT OF OLD SCHOOL HIP HOP, LIKE DMX OR PEOPLE WHO PUT THOSE BEATS IN THEIR MUSIC THAT KEEPS YOU GOING. MAYBE AT THE END OF THE

ALL CLOTHING
THROUGHOUT BY
SPORTS PHILOSOPHY,
TRAINERS THROUGHOUT
BY PUMA



WORKOUT WHEN I WANT TO STRETCH I'LL HAVE SOME MELLOW MUSIC.

WHAT DOES YOUR DAILY DIET LOOK LIKE?

I NOW TRAIN IN THE MORNINGS AT AROUND 6.30AM BECAUSE THE GYM IS TOO BUSY IN THE EVENINGS AND I LIKE TO KEEP THE EVENINGS FREE FOR MY SOCIAL LIFE. IT'S THE SACRIFICE THAT I PUT IN. I HAVE BREAKFAST WHEN I GET BACK BUT BEFORE I TRAIN I

HAVE A PRE-WORKOUT MEAL WITH SOME AMINO ACIDS TO MAKE SURE THAT I DON'T BREAK DOWN ANY MUSCLE. AFTER I COME BACK I HAVE BREAKFAST. I HAVE A RECOVERY SHAKE WITH WHEY PROTEIN AND THEN SOME CARBS, SUCH AS A BANANA. HALF AN HOUR LATER I WILL HAVE AN ACTUAL BREAKFAST. I OFTEN HAVE AN OMELETTE WITH LOADS OF VEGETABLES, SPINACH, PEPPERS, ETC. AND THEN A BOWL OF

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OATS JUST TO MAKE SURE THAT I'VE GOT SOME CARBS AND PROTEIN. I THEN HAVE A BIG GLASS OF WATER WITH MULTIVITAMINS AND FISH OILS. FOR LUNCH, I HAVE SOMETHING LIKE A SWEET POTATO WITH FISH, CHICKEN OR RED MEAT WITH LOTS OF VEGETABLES AND FRUIT. I NORMALLY ALSO HAVE SOME SIMPLE BERRIES TO BALANCE IT OUT A BIT. I THEN EAT SOON AFTERWARDS AROUND 4PM OR 5PM, THE TIME YOU COULD CALL DINNER BUT REALLY A PRE-DINNER DINNER! I HAVE SOMETHING SIMILAR LIKE SWEET POTATO OR BROWN RICE WITH A DIFFERENT SOURCE OF PROTEIN LIKE TUNA OR SALMON. I ALSO HAVE LOTS OF GREEN VEGETABLES AND FIBRE TO KEEP ME FULL AND SATISFIED, AND AGAIN, SOME FRUIT, BERRIES OR SOMETHING AFTERWARDS. OR MAYBE A HEALTHY PROTEIN DESSERT DEPENDING ON HOW I'M FEELING. THEN I'LL EAT A DINNER OF A VERY SIMILAR MEAL AROUND 9PM BEFORE BED. THIS IS MY TREAT. I'LL HAVE A BOWL OF PORRIDGE WITH NATURAL ALMOND BUTTER ON TOP AND SOME CHOPPED DATES AND THEN I'M OUT LIKE A LIGHT. IN TOTAL IT'S REALLY FIVE MEALS, SO IT SOUNDS LIKE A LOT, BUT WHEN I EAT THE MEALS I DON'T FEEL LIKE I'M EATING THAT MUCH BECAUSE I EXERCISE AND I NEED THAT EXTRA NUTRITION.

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REAL BODIES

OPEN UP
ABOUT
YOUR
BODY

**Chris Owens, 35,
London, Entertainer**

One of my friends said, 'you're always in your underwear all over Facebook, so it's about time you did it in a magazine', and I thought yeah, they're probably right. I used to be quite a big guy – I was about 18 stone at one point – and through dance and everything I lost weight. I'm more comfortable in my body than I've ever been before, so I have no trouble taking my clothes off now.

HEIGHT/WEIGHT

5'9

11

STONE
154 POUNDS

WORDS: BEN KELLY
PHOTOGRAPHY:
JOSEPH SINCLAIR



DIET

MOST DAYS I MAKE A HOMEMADE SOUP OR I HAVE SALMON AND SPINACH, EGGS, HEALTHY THINGS LIKE THAT WITH LOTS OF PROTEIN. I AM USUALLY VERY CAREFUL, BUT ONCE A WEEK I WILL HAVE A CHEAT DAY WHERE I EAT ANYTHING I WANT. I THINK YOU'VE GOT TO HAVE A CHEAT DAY BECAUSE OTHERWISE YOU CRAVE WHAT YOU WANT.

GUILTY PLEASURES

CHEESE IS A MASSIVE DOWNFALL FOR ME. I'D BUY A CATHEDRAL CITY BLOCK OF CHEESE AND CRACKERS AND THAT'S ME HAPPY.



504cals
CRACKERS
per 100g

416cals
CHEESE
per 100g

LOSING
WEIGHT

I did every diet. Cabbage soup; Slimming World; Weight Watchers; Atkins; every single one over a couple of years. I got the weight down, and it's just stayed that way now. I have quite an energetic job. I am part of a Take That tribute act, where I do Mark and sometimes Robbie, and I'm in a One Direction tribute act too.

Manscaping

I trim, because I've got a tattoo on this arm. I trim my chest and my stomach. I used to live in Spain and the Spanish trim everything, head to toe, so I used to do that. Maintenance is very important, especially in my industry.



Top Body Product

Since I was 16 I've only ever used Nivea moisturiser. Every time I shower I moisturise my entire body. If I'm splashing out I'll buy Clinique products; their All About Eyes cream among some others.



Clothes

I pretty much live in vests, but I think that's from living abroad as well. You're always in vests, shorts and stuff like that. My friends say I've got quite a commercial look – jeans and vests, or jeans and t-shirts. But I like to keep up with fashion trends too.



Quick Questions

Do you think the gay community puts too much emphasis on body image?

Massively, but I mean everyone's got that little bit of superficiality in them. But it's not just us, it's the media too. In general the world is a very superficial place, but especially in the gay community. It's all about how you look and what category you fit into. I think there's a lot of pressure on the younger generation. If you look back ten years it wasn't this bad. All my gay friends are very body image orientated, definitely.

What do you think is responsible for that?

I'd say it's a lot to do with Grindr, Tinder and all these different apps that you download. You can put any kind of image on with phones now. You can change how your body looks a bit, and change the lighting and the shading to bring out muscle and all that. If you look on Grindr you can see all these

great pictures, but when you meet people in real life it's a lot different.

Do you filter your pictures?

I use Snapchat a lot, and all I'll do is lighten it or darken the images, but I don't adjust anything major because I want people to see me as I am. I don't tend to put proper pictures of myself on Facebook; it's usually people taking them of me when we're out in a bar, and then I'm getting my clothes off!

Are you happy with your body?

Yes, I am now. It's taken a long time. After the weight loss I went the other way and lost too much weight, and earlier this year I put a photo up of myself and I was horrifically skinny, I was 9 stone! Everyone thought I had a problem, and I probably did at the time. It's partly to do with the industry I'm in, but it's also the gay community, which can be very superficial.

The **USN Body Makeover Challenge** is all about self-improvement and making positive changes to your body and your lifestyle.

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7 EASY STEPS TO THE NEW YOU!



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2 Now to get started!

Apply for your Body Makeover Guide by emailing challenge@usn.co.uk, this guide will give you diet and training programmes to support your challenge. Why not join our Facebook group, search for USN Body Makeover, this group will provide you with advice and support throughout your 12 weeks. You can also visit usn.co.uk for any further information on the challenge and for help selecting the USN products needed to support your goals.



3 Take a 'before' photo with a daily newspaper as proof of your start date. If you have registered online you can upload this photo into your account.



4 Keep track of your progress! Track your weekly progress by accessing your online profile and updating weekly. Take regular photos, they are a great way to see how you are progressing.



5 At the end of the 12 weeks, take your 'after' photo, holding a daily newspaper for date validation.



6 Well done! Now complete your profile and submit online. Your completed application must include:

- A 'before' and 'after' photo
- A report on how your experience of the challenge has been, and what it has meant to you



7 USN will send you a certificate of completion, and you are now in with a chance to win £5000 cash, £2000 of supplements for a year and to become a USN ambassador and the face of Body Makeover. You can find out information or to register for the USN Body Makeover Challenge by visiting usn.co.uk

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VITABIOTICS
SCIENCE OF HEALTHY LIVING

THE CLINIC THE RED ISSUE

with **Dr Christian**



***Our health expert
Dr Christian Jessen
answers your
medical queries***



GOT A PROBLEM, WANT ANSWERS? • EMAIL DRCHRISTIAN@ATTITUDE.CO.UK

Getting tested for HIV can be scary, but honestly it shouldn't be. The condition is entirely manageable. Although people sometimes struggle with the mental impact of the diagnosis, physically, if you test positive, early detection, monitoring and effective treatment means that your life largely carries on as before.

Incredible medical progress has been made in the last 20 years and HIV treatment is now very effective. If you are diagnosed with HIV before it has damaged your body and you are put on effective treatment, you can expect to live as long as anyone else.

HIV treatment lowers the amount of HIV in the body to undetectable levels. Global research, known as the PARTNER study, has found that it is very likely HIV cannot be passed on when the virus is undetectable. In other words, if someone is on effective HIV treatment, it is extremely unlikely that he will pass on HIV to anyone else.

This is a massive breakthrough. It means that if everyone with HIV were on effective treatment, we could finally stop the spread of HIV. Until then, it is essential to use condoms to protect yourself from HIV.

If left untreated, HIV can be fatal. It damages the immune system, preventing our bodies from fighting off infections that we could normally handle. More than 500 people died from HIV-related illness in the UK in 2013.

That's why testing for HIV is crucial, and why campaigns such as National HIV Testing Week are so important. Testing Week takes place this month, encouraging people

Fact box:

What is HIV?

- HIV STANDS FOR HUMAN IMMUNODEFICIENCY VIRUS.
- IT IS A VIRUS THAT WEAKENS YOUR IMMUNE SYSTEM, THE PART OF YOUR BODY THAT FIGHTS OFF DISEASES.
- IF YOU HAVE HIV YOU ARE DESCRIBED AS BEING HIV POSITIVE.
- IF SOMEONE WITH HIV DOES NOT RECEIVE TREATMENT, THEY COULD DEVELOP A RANGE OF ILLNESSES KNOWN AS AIDS (ACQUIRED IMMUNE DEFICIENCY SYNDROME).
- IT IS NOT POSSIBLE TO DEVELOP AIDS UNLESS YOU ARE ALREADY HIV POSITIVE.
- THANKS TO ADVANCES IN TREATMENT, FAR FEWER HIV POSITIVE PEOPLE IN THE UK NOW DEVELOP AIDS.

across the country to take an HIV test. Organised by sexual health charity Terrence Higgins Trust, it is backed by a social media campaign with guys of different ages, all with the same message – stop putting it off and take the test.

This year I am proud to be the National HIV Testing Week Ambassador. You'll be seeing my mug on outdoor advertising, and I'm using platforms such as this column to get the message out there. Test and protect – by regular testing and condom use you can keep yourself and others safe.

I often get asked: "Is HIV even a big deal anymore?" In a word – yes. Gay and bisexual men are at a higher risk of contracting HIV in the UK than the rest of the population. One in 12 MSM (men who have sex with men) in London (one in seven on the 'gay scene' itself) are now living with HIV; as are one in 20 elsewhere in the country. At least 108,000 people are living with HIV in the UK, and the latest statistics show that more than half of all new HIV diagnoses are among gay men.

Most concerning is the fact that nearly one in four people with HIV do not realise they have it, so they are not getting treated and are damaging their immune system and could accidentally pass it on to others. HIV is transmitted through bodily fluids such as blood and semen (cum). This means it can be passed on through bareback sex, for example, or through sharing needles if you are injecting drugs.

It's now easier than ever to have an HIV test. Get tested at your sexual health clinic or GP surgery, or at any one of thousands of pop-up clinics in places such as saunas, libraries,

sport clubs and gyms. Testing is quick – only a small sample of your blood is taken – and some HIV tests give a result in just one minute.

Or you can now use a postal testing kit. This enables you to send a small sample of your blood to a lab and to receive your results by phone. If the test indicates that HIV may be present, another test will be taken to confirm this and you will be given the information and support you need.

Finding out that you are HIV positive enables you to get the treatment you need as soon as you need it. This will prevent HIV from damaging your body, and it will make it much less likely that you will pass HIV on to anyone else.

Testing for HIV is free and completely confidential – no one else will know that you have taken an HIV test, and only you will be told the result.

You can use the National HIV Testing Week website to find a clinic near you or to order a postal testing kit: tht.org.uk/itstartswithme

It is recommended that every gay man tests for HIV at least once a year, or more often if you've been at risk (if you've had sex without a condom with someone whose HIV status you don't know, for example). So, there's no need to wait – get tested now.

Like me, you can show your support for National HIV Testing Week by putting #ImTesting in your social media posts. Testing for HIV, and encouraging your friends to test too, really will help save lives. Potentially yours as well as others.

Dr Christian is on Twitter:
@doctorchristian

~~SPOONING~~
~~STOONING~~
~~KISSING~~
~~LICKING~~
~~SUCKING~~
IGNORANCE
SPREADS HIV.

This World AIDS Day, the National AIDS Trust are changing the way the world sees HIV. Join us at worldaidsday.org

**THINK
POSITIVE
#RETHINK
HIV**

CONFESSIONS OF A COMPULSIVE OVEREATER

JE SUIS FATTY GAY

DURING HIS FIRST GAY CLUB OUTING, FATTY GAY DISCOVERS
ALCOHOL, TRASHY MUSIC AND A NEW ADDICTION.



I was 18 when I went to my first gay club. I was promised fun and fabulousness – and a boyfriend too, with a bit of luck. By now I was nearly 18 stone, and, having left school, my best friend Tommy and I hung out most days in HMV, trawling for imported Madonna vinyl and limited edition Take That CDs. Every other Friday night we went to our local gay youth group to meet other teens like us. There wasn't really much else to do, but Tommy met his first boyfriend there. James was a sweet guy, but I often felt jealous. Tommy had someone. I didn't. In my mind, that meant he was better than me.

Tommy wasn't a whale of unlovable blubber like I was. Tommy said 'I love you' to his boyfriend. I said it to my pillow. Tommy wore nice clothes. I had difficulty squeezing into anything remotely fashionable. If you're a fat girl, you can get away wearing fat girl's clothes, put on some make-up and still look pretty. If you're a fat guy, you're screwed. Buying clothes was traumatic. I refused to have clothes made for me. Instead I lived for months at a time in just one pair of 44-inch jeans and a shapeless XXL brown v-neck. Sometimes I wore a Ben & Jerry's tee I'd got at the local Odeon. It said 'Ask me for a free scoop' on the front. No one ever did. You'll have seen people like me on the bus or train. And yes, you too may have looked at me with the same kind of disgust

and judgment I had for myself.

I wanted a boyfriend desperately, but people only looked at me to point or laugh. The idea of actually having sex with anyone was completely alien. Yet I still held out for my Disney fantasy where I'd be whisked off my feet by a handsome gay prince on his white horse. When Tommy and James wanted time alone together, I stayed at home. I hated them and hated myself. Bitterly resentful, I watched TV and binged my face off.

It filled me with horror then when one Thursday night Tommy suggested we try going to a gay club. It was the early 90s when the word 'grinder' was still associated with coffee. In London, the scene gravitated exclusively around Soho's Old Compton Street. Every chrome fitted bar was packed with men standing in packs or alone, hoping to pick up.

Apparently, the younger crowd headed to

G-A-Y but in reality, at that point, there weren't that many young people there at all. The club-kid scene was still a couple of years off, and the place seemed to be made up of older men in white vests or crop tops with

hairy backs, wiggling about to Kylie remixes. Of course, I wore my black jeans and brown smock to cover myself as much as possible. As we weaved nervously in and out of the crowd, I was aware of being stared at. I remember hearing someone shrieking 'bloody hell, you're a big girl, aren't you?'

I felt hideous and out of place, but I loved the trashy music they played and the buzz of being in a gay club. I wanted to belong. G-A-Y certainly felt fun and fabulous – but I didn't. Until I had a drink.

I wasn't really much of a drinker before then. It was cheaper and more fun to get drunk on food. But I couldn't eat here, so I drank instead. And it didn't take much. After two bottles of Diamond White I surprised Tommy and James by randomly approaching guys. One after the other they blanked me, which made me behave more outrageously until I wondered off around the club on my own. After another two drinks the only man who seemed to show any interest was just as pissed as I was. He was in his early fifties with an unkempt 70s style beard. I didn't fancy him at all. But it was attention from someone. Finally, someone wanted me. He was no Disney prince, and neither did he come on a horse. Instead I followed him to a dark corner where he came in my mouth. I felt ashamed afterwards, and didn't want Tommy and James to find out. But they had seen the whole thing. My bearded friend, who we nicknamed 'ABBA' because of his uncanny resemblance to Benny Andersson, was nowhere to be seen.

Though I felt disgusted with myself for having sex in dark corners of bars with whomever I could entice, it now seemed like my only real chance of meeting men. And I was about to become as addicted to it as I already was to food.

jesuisfattygay@attitude.co.uk

**'I STILL HELD OUT FOR MY
DISNEY FANTASY WHERE I'D
BE WHISKED OFF MY FEET BY
A HANDSOME GAY PRINCE'**



**MARK AMES
PRESENTS**



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Wayne G

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LAME**

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SAYS TETTERDANDY

Ru Coming Out?

WE LOOK AT HOW YOU TACKLED THE WHOLE COMING OUT THING

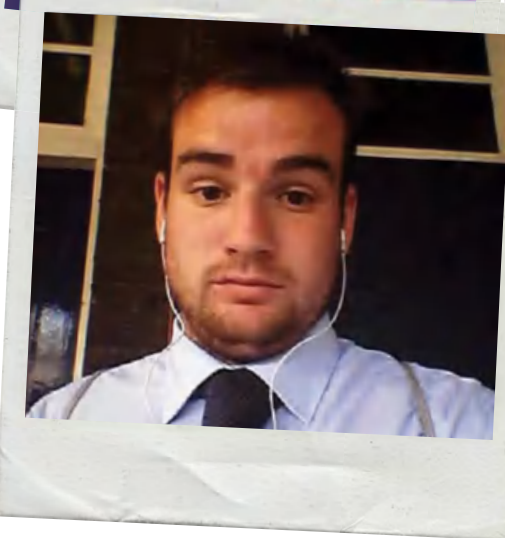
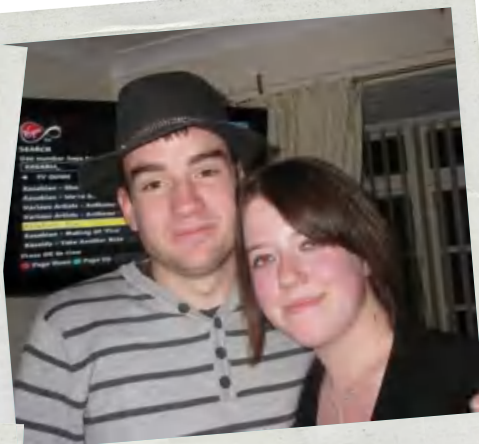
TOM CARR, 24, BEDFORD

I have always been addicted to the sporting lifestyle: the competitiveness, the thrill of a victory and even the pain of defeat. However, one part I despise is the homophobia that often entrenches it. It doesn't get to me as much as it used to, but growing up in that environment while still in that closet is a time I'll never forget.

I first realised I was 'different' when I was 15. I was gazing out the window in French class when a handsome man walked through the school gates. He was around 17 or 18, and his shirt was slightly undone. I was completely captivated by him, and it was at this point that it dawned on me. Looking around the classroom, I realised I also found some of my classmates attractive. It was almost as if that moment had unlocked a part of my brain. It took me a few more years to realise the enormity of those few minutes.

Despite the gravity of that moment, I still remained heavily involved in school sports. I found it difficult to be around some of the guys in the changing room though, and I bottled up any feelings, afraid of ridicule. By this stage, I thought I was ill. Being gay was feminine. Being gay made you a joke. Being gay was wrong. There was no such thing as a gay footballer. The two worlds collided and it came to a point where I felt I had to choose one, so I chose football and shunned my sexual desires. I knew about Justin Fashanu, the footballer who committed suicide after coming out as gay. I couldn't let that be me. I even entered relationships with girls, although they never lasted very long as I knew it wasn't what I wanted. Despite my attempts, the 'social norm' wasn't for me.

I had made the decision to not come out while in school after witnessing the one out gay guy constantly subjected to endless bullying. But



I HAD MADE THE DECISION NOT TO COME OUT IN SCHOOL AFTER WITNESSING THE ONE OUT GAY GUY SUBJECTED TO ENDLESS BULLYING

remaining in the closet affected me in ways I could never imagine. I slowly became more and more depressed, my grades plunged and my interest in everything wavered. I dreaded going to football training as I worried someone would find out about me. It broke me having to listen to endless taunts about a pair of boots being 'gay' along with the rest of it.

When I turned 18 events took a turn for the worse. Having left school, I found myself in my first job; an office full of homophobia greeted me every morning. I found my only escape to be turning to alcohol. Weekend nights morphed into huge drinking sessions, as getting drunk felt like the only time I could switch off from the dangerous thoughts inside my head. It all came to a head on a night out in Manchester, when a hospital visit at 5am signalled the end of the road. I

had to come clean.

It turned out my friends didn't mind at all. Buoyed on by their optimism, (and the alcohol), I sent my mom a text. I'm not usually one for regrets, but coming out to her while drunk at 5am is certainly one of them. It turned out she already knew. Ah, mother's intuition.

One huge hurdle had already been crossed as my family and friends now all knew about my sexuality. However, the changing rooms of football grounds across the country were a different kettle of fish. And they all so often epitomise the very word banter. But being a part of a football club is at the very heart of who I am, so I moved clubs to start afresh.

Joining the new club proved to be a good idea. I am open now with my teammates. Although I never sat down and told everyone that I'm gay, I subtly say things in conversation that means I don't have to. "I went on a date on Saturday night with a guy called James", was a sentence that no one batted an eyelid at. Being completely natural and relaxed about who I am ensured it didn't become a big deal. My teammates still take the mickey a bit, but its mutual, consensual mickey taking, and they know the boundaries. For me, that is a perfect situation. And now, after all this time, I'm truly happy being myself.

OB

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Family Guys



[L-R] AMELIE, IAN, PAUL AND DANIEL. OBAN, SCOTLAND

Ian Johnstone adopted brother and sister Daniel and Amelie in a previous relationship, and has since become engaged to his new partner Paul. He told Ben Kelly about finding love in the depths of Scotland as a single dad.

I adopted the kids with my ex-partner in 2004. I had been a chairman of the Children's Panel for many years, so I had dealt with kids going through the process of being in care and being adopted. I grew up in care myself and I was never adopted. I wouldn't have cared if I'd been adopted by a man and a woman, or two men, so long as they loved me and cared for me, and I knew we could give kids a really good life. We went through the adoption process and it was very invasive, very challenging, and it took two years.

In the end, we went down to see these two children in the north of England, Daniel who was two and a half and Amelie who was eleven months. Daniel has autism and Asperger's syndrome, and the first time we met them I had to save his life because he had a minor fit and was choking. Amelie was very young, and for the first few years she just

clung to my leg like a koala bear all the time. Daniel was very full on because of his learning difficulties, but interestingly, the one we've had more difficulty with in the long run has been Amelie, especially as she's become a teenager, whereas Daniel has become a charming, funny little guy.

My partner and I split in 2008 and then I was living with the kids on my own. I went back to university for two years but it became too demanding to do that with the children too. I went on Plenty of Fish and met this Polish guy called Paul, over in Glengarry. We met up and our first date was in Perth about a year and a half ago, and we ended up spending the whole day together.

I was worried about how he would be with the kids, but he got on really well with them, and actually, seeing me as a parent was very attractive to him. I have to give him a lot of credit for coming into a situation where I have two kids and taking that on.



PAUL PROPOSED TO ME RECENTLY, WITH THE HELP OF FIRST MINISTER NICOLA STURGEON

Not everyone would want that and I really admire him for it.

Paul proposed to me recently, with the help of First Minister Nicola Sturgeon. We went to an open evening where you got to ask her questions, and though she didn't read out Paul's, when we went for a selfie at the end, he got around to it, and she asked me if I would marry Paul on his behalf. There was no hesitation whatsoever. She said it

was the highlight of her trip.

You don't have to live in a big city and have the right image to have a successful gay relationship. We live in the countryside, we have horses and we're always muddy. I've got two kids but there was somebody out there for me, and to anyone else in my position, I would say there's someone out there for you too.

Paul and I are definitely going to have more kids once we're married. For all the work parenting involves, it is balanced out by the richness it rewards.

IF YOU'D LIKE TO BE CONSIDERED FOR FAMILY GUYS EMAIL PHOTOS AND A FEW WORDS TO BEN.KELLY@ATTITUDE.CO.UK

AS TOLD TO BEN KELLY

*How to:***KNOW IF HE'S
PLAYING STRAIGHT**

1

His favourite part of the sports match he's dragged you to is the national anthem.

2

His phone's wallpaper is of a bodybuilder – because you know, motivation.

3

He's a member of a chain of gyms with hundreds of locations but frequents the Soho facilities.

4

He opens the door for you while simultaneously calling you 'mate'.

5

You receive semi naked 'progress pictures' or post gym selfies because he's gonna be "shredded by swimsuit season".

6

He calls his friends "The Boys".

7

He takes you to a pub and orders a house white.

8

He drinks protein shakes to bulk up but won't touch fast food.

9

He'll initiate 'bro hugs' while watching a movie.

10

His Netflix recently watched tab shows a selection of horror films but also all six seasons of *RuPaul's Drag Race*.

WORDS: JAMES CRAWFORD SMITH

Paul Flynn

IS OVER IT



BEING IN A RELATIONSHIP DOESN'T EPITOMISE HAPPINESS

A FRIEND ONCE asked me if I could imagine the man he'd end up with. It stumped me a little, not least because he was then cavorting from one disastrously inappropriate fellow to the next. I don't suppose he'd have asked if he wasn't. My initial thought was 'the opposite of the last five and the exact opposite of the five before that'. They'd really started to stack up. I bit my tongue, eventually saying 'someone who you love and who loves you back.' It is the only reasonable answer to this kind of insane life conjecture.

I was thinking about this conversation when reading Graham Norton's recent musings on being perennially single. In his early 50s, Mr Norton has started to wear his singleness and stop imagining someone who is going to come along that will alter his life forever. It shouldn't be, but it felt like a brave thing to say publicly. The pre-eminence of couple-ship and that *Sex and the City*-ish idea of 'The One' seem to have inevitably sharpened in the gay conversation post-same sex marriage. The presumption that everyone wants to be in a couple has extended far beyond its heteronormative nucleus.

Norton is a readable person. Within five minutes of his broadcasting you know he is an immutable character, fully aware of his strengths and how best to maximise them. He dresses idiosyncratically, for himself, in order to (often quite literally) shine. He's funny, sharp, warm and attractive but he's categorically the star of his own show. He controls conversations for a living. None of this spells boyfriend. Much of it spells happiness. Self-awareness usually does.

With characters like Norton, there is no room for anyone else because his

world is full to the brim of him.

Taking ownership of this struck me as a forthright, grown-up stance to take. I could think of a few acquaintances, straight and gay, that would do well to follow his lead. It's not comparative or self-congratulatory thinking. It's adult.

With quizzical timing, no sooner had Norton declared his state of independent grace than Tom Daley had posted pictures of his'n'his engagement rings with Dustin Lance Black on Instagram. Daley is at a new vanguard of young gay life. He belongs to a generation I will only ever understand at a distance of some considerable emotional and temporal remove. Yet still it is clear from the choices he's made in his early life so far he is a man of considerable tenacity, adventure and substance. He's weathered one highly public loss, of his father, with the stoicism of men three times his age. It all spells boyfriend. Husband, even. His relationship with Black has been neither optimised for commercial gain nor hidden from view. He finds his own climate, making his own good fortune.

While you want to wish them both the best of luck, let's not slip into the pattern of believing they've achieved an unforeseen new holy grail. It's tempting to gauge the most obvious generational difference between Norton and Daley, but when it comes to love we should cut both some slack. Being single is not a failure. Being in a couple is not a success. They are different tangents of the same – as tiresome, brilliant, infuriating, validating and exposing as one another.

“
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BRILLIANT,
INFURIATING,
VALIDATING AND
EXPOSING AS
ONE ANOTHER



ICONIC

Matt Cain @MattCainWriter

WITH SALES OF OVER 50 MILLION RECORDS, THE PET SHOP BOYS ARE THE UK'S MOST SUCCESSFUL MUSICAL DUO WHO HAVE PROVIDED US WITH A UNIQUE MUSICAL COMMENTARY OF THE LAST 30 YEARS

PET SHOP BOYS — IT'S A SIN

'IT'S A, IT'S A, IT'S A, IT'S A SIN.' It's one of the Pet Shop Boys' biggest hits and we can all sing along to the chorus. But how many of us have asked ourselves which sin Neil Tennant's singing about?

I'm not sure I did when I fell in love with the song at the age of ten. Released in 1987, *It's a Sin* was the lead single from the duo's second album, *Actually*, and a number one hit in the UK. It has a dramatic production, a ferociously catchy hook, and was promoted by a glossy video directed by gay filmmaker Derek Jarman. In it, Neil Tennant plays an outlaw, chained to his jailer Chris Lowe, and subjected to some kind of Inquisition in front of several surprisingly hot monks. The concept is a perfect match for the song's lyrics, which involve Tennant protesting against the guilt his Catholic upbringing made him feel. But what sin could possibly be so bad that it makes him look back on his life 'forever with a sense of shame'?

Listening to the song now it seems obvious that what he's singing about is being gay. But it was released during a different time, when pop stars could still keep secrets and fans asked fewer questions. Before the internet, fans like me had precious little info about our favourite acts' music, never mind their sexuality. But unlike some pop stars, the Pet Shop Boys never lied about being gay; they simply dodged the question and wrote lyrics

that were androgynous. It wasn't till 1994 that Neil Tennant finally came out (in an interview with *Attitude*). But somehow I think fans like me always understood it and it's a subtext that looking back now, you can see running through all of the duo's early work. And nowhere did it break through to the surface more than on *It's a Sin*.

The song represents the moment when the Pet Shop Boys really hit their stride and the public first fully understood them. On their debut album, *Please*, they'd given us their trademark intelligent electro-pop but it wasn't until *It's a Sin* that they started to complement their downbeat performance style with a camp theatricality built up around them – through videos, dancing, costume design and (later) live shows. It's a brilliant combination and one that has helped them become the UK's most successful duo ever, selling a massive 50 million records.



And they're still going strong. Their last album *Electric* is considered to be one of their best and was a huge hit with a fanbase that's still fiercely loyal. Perhaps that's because so many of us can remember how we felt when we first heard *It's a Sin* – and so many of us who weren't able to express our own anger at being made to feel ashamed of being gay were thankful that the Pet Shop Boys could do it for us.

MY FAVOURITE PET SHOP BOYS MOMENTS



Being Boring is a tragic and beautiful reflection on growing up amidst the AIDS epidemic and a stand out classic.



Metamorphosis is one of my favourite album tracks, a flamboyant Hi-NRG banger about coming out, sex and becoming a man.



It doesn't get more euphoric than *Go West*, the duo's electro cover of the Village People classic. Live, it's an arms in the air mega hit.

A problem shared...



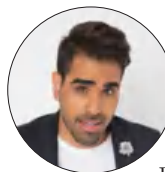
GOT A PROBLEM?
DR RANJ SINGH AND
WAYNE DHESEI ARE
HERE TO OFFER
THEIR ADVICE...

Dear Attitude,

I'm in my last year at uni and I ended up having unprotected sex with a guy that I've been with before. I guess we just got really drunk and let our guard down. I knew I should have gone to get PEP afterwards, but I thought as we had slept together a couple of times last year it would be OK. I got a really bad flu for a couple weeks, and went to the doctor who suggested I take an HIV test. I didn't think it was necessary but it came back positive.

It has absolutely floored me. I just didn't think somebody else my age would be at risk of catching HIV. I told my best friend at uni who has been really supportive. I also told my sister in Ireland in confidence but she ended up telling my mum, who is devastated – we're from a really Catholic family. My mum wants me to come home straight away, but I can't until Christmas now and I'm terrified of what she must think of me.

I'm also scared for the future, and how this will affect my future relationships. And whether I should discuss this with the guy who I had unprotected sex with. *Erik, 21, Manchester*



Hi Erik,

Getting a diagnosis of HIV is life-changing, and adjusting to it can be tough. But acknowledging it and facing it head on, as you are, is exactly the right thing to do.

Fortunately, we live in a time when although a diagnosis of HIV is very serious, but, if you get diagnosed early and follow the doctor's advice, isn't the death sentence it used to be.

Having an HIV test after unprotected sex was absolutely correct and you can now get tested as early as a month after potential exposure, depending on your local clinic. Knowing your HIV status is vitally important. We all need to know if we are HIV negative or positive. Around 25% of people who are positive don't know it because they haven't tested. That's why some A&Es now offer testing to everyone that attends for any reason. Knowing your status is vital and means you can get



proper treatment as soon as possible. Treatment also means you are less infectious.

Although you can't go back on what has happened, you now have the opportunity to take back some control. With proper monitoring and treatment, people with HIV can live near normal lives. You have to take extra care and it's so important you look after yourself. Many people find having HIV very stressful, however.

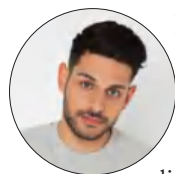
You have to take drugs for the rest of your life and pay close attention to your health. You also have a responsibility to look after any partners you may have in future. Likewise, it's important that the person you slept with knows if he is positive or not. He may unknowingly be risking his health or that of others. If you don't

want to contact him yourself then speak to a sexual health clinic about contact tracing and they can advise him to get tested anonymously.

Getting support and speaking to friends and family is so important, and your mum will come round too. There is so much support out there for HIV positive people that you need never feel alone. That could be medical help, emotional support, or advice in terms of the impact on other aspects of life (e.g. employment, insurance). The National AIDS Trust has lots of great information on their website and you should definitely check that out (nat.org.uk).

At the end of the day, whilst being HIV positive doesn't have the same implications it used to, and the stigma surrounding the condition is getting better, it must be respected and taken seriously. It is a big deal, but it's also something that thousands of people in the UK manage and live with and you can too. It will be OK. **Ranj**

• Dr Ranj Singh is a NHS and TV doctor and host of *CBeebies Get Well Soon*.



Dear Erik,

You say that you didn't think that someone your age would be a HIV risk.

Unfortunately HIV does not discriminate and anyone can catch it. Condoms are still the best way to prevent sexually transmitted infections

and in cases where unprotected anal sex has happened, PEP (an anti-HIV medication) is available up to 72 hours after unsafe sex.

It's completely natural that you're worried about what your mum's reaction will be when you do eventually go home. However, the fact that she asked you to come home suggests she wants you close to her so she can take care of you. I'd be more concerned if she had asked you

not to come home!

It's important that you both understand that although receiving an HIV diagnosis might be scary, many people continue to lead happy, healthy lives. It's true, however, sadly, that some people, including some gay people, have prejudice about people with HIV. This is unacceptable.

Having HIV doesn't make you dirty, it just means you have a virus. Everybody is worthy of love and respect and we all need to show this to one another.

It is true that some people are scared of dating or having sex with someone who is HIV positive but many people are not. On successful treatment positive person can be 'undetectable' which doctors believe means they cannot pass HIV on. With condom use included it means there are many, many couples gay and straight in loving relationships where one has HIV and the other does not – and the negative partner stays negative. Having HIV often makes dating more complicated but it doesn't mean the end of your love life. It's true that having HIV can be very stressful to deal with and takes some time for some people to accept they have it. But you can live with it. The Terrence Higgins Trust website has lots of support and information that you and your family may find helpful, including stories from people who have been diagnosed. You can also join their online community of people living with HIV in the UK. Visit ttht.org.uk/myhiv.

It sounds like your friend at uni has been a great source of support for you so continue to speak to them. **Wayne**

• Wayne Dhesi is the founder of Rucomingout.com and a Youth Programmes Manager at Stonewall UK. Advice at www.avert.org/aids-help-uk + www.ttht.org.uk + gmfa.org.uk + switchboard.lgbt + nuclear.co.uk



COMING TO TERMS WITH A DIAGNOSIS

Our five key points to keep in mind after being diagnosed with HIV...

1 An HIV diagnosis can often be shocking and frightening. It's important to know that these feelings will pass. The shock will go and you can start getting to grips with what it means and looking after yourself.

2 Emotional support is so important in the early stages. Speaking to a friend or family member that you can trust can be really helpful. You can also contact a helpline or ask if your sexual health clinic has a HIV counsellor.

3 Although the rules around disclosure have changed, HIV may have an impact on things like employment. The National AIDS Trust has lots of useful information around these issues (nat.org.uk).

4 It's never too early to start looking after yourself! Get a healthy lifestyle and ensure you get the proper checks and treatment to help prevent HIV progressing to AIDS.

5 Many people with HIV are now able to lead near normal lives, but that is because they are responsible and take it seriously. You can't change what has happened, but you can take control of your health and that of any future partners.

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Iain Dale

R. KELLY ONCE wrote a song called *Age Ain't Nothing but a Number*. It's all about a young girl desperate to date an older man. The message in the song is that a difference in age doesn't matter if the mutual feelings are strong enough. I wonder if that really holds true.

In an interview a few weeks ago Graham Norton said: "gay men my age don't want to date someone of their own age". A rather broad brush statement, to say the very least. What he may have meant was that he personally prefers a younger model. Nothing wrong with that. Each to his own, but it's so dangerous to perpetuate the myth that all older gay men are obsessed with recapturing their long lost youth by wanting to bed a series of pubescent twinks.

Of course there will be a group of people who only like a younger model, just as there are plenty of twinks who only want to have sex with or a relationship with an over 40, 50 or 60-year-old. Or even 70 come to that. But they, surely, are in a minority.

Graham Norton has to be wrong when he says that men in their early fifties aren't interested in men their own age. I'd have thought that the vast majority of us put age way down our list of priorities when thinking who we'd like to bed or spend the rest of our lives with. It must surely depend on who you 'click' with.

If age was the be all and end all, wouldn't all of us who have reached our fifties be looking to trade our existing middle-aged partners in for a younger model? No, we wouldn't [my partner heaves a sigh of relief – I hope!], because we're not that shallow.

I'm a huge fan of Graham Norton, and have really enjoyed reading his books, which are very honest and open about his search for love. But he needs to be far more careful about making comments in interviews because he could be mistaken for perpetuating the tired old seedy gay myth that we're all only

ANSWERING THE AGE OLD QUESTION OF, ER, AGE AND LOVE



interested in younger models.

That's not to say that there's anything wrong with large age-different relationships. Different strokes for different folks, I guess.

There are two years between me and my partner, and personally I couldn't imagine being in a long-term relationship with anyone much more than ten years my junior, but who knows?

I just think that in my case, there would be too many differences in cultural narrative. Bucks Fizz won Eurovision in 1981. Angela Rippon appeared on *Morecambe & Wise* in 1976. *Dancing Queen* got to number 1 in 1976. These things are important!

They say that love can conquer everything, including big differences in age, and maybe there's something in that. But if a 25-year-old gets together with a 65-year-old, they may have some very happy years together, but what happens after 15 years when the ages become 40 and 80? Is a 40-year-old ready to become a carer? The answer is that in many cases love transcends issues like that, but in others it won't. However, in those cases it surely means that the love wasn't true after all.

I know that if anything happened to me, or anything happened to my partner we'd care for each other for as long as it took, because that's what happens when people are in love and totally committed to each other. 'In sickness and in health' may be seen as just a vow, but if a relationship means anything, surely that is one vow which has to be kept.

It is true that age should be seen as merely a number, but as I get older I become increasingly aware that it isn't. I may be 53, but my brain doesn't operate as if I am. Mentally I'm somewhere in my mid-20s. That may give me a younger approach to life, but it doesn't mean I'm unaware that the years are ticking by.

Oh, by the way Angela Rippon was a BBC newsreader in 1976.

There, if you're a younger reader, you've just learned something.



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(OK, WELL, MAYBE THERE ARE A FEW...)

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HERE'S JUST A SAMPLING OF THE HEAVENLY OFFERINGS ON STAGE IN THE CITY OF ANGELS THIS WINTER

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With more than a dozen of her timeless characters—from Ernestine to Edith Ann—the incomparable Lily Tomlin provides comical insights on the human condition.

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CenterTheatreGroup.org
AHMANSON THEATRE
30 JANUARY — 13 MARCH
AN ACT OF GOD

God takes the form of Emmy Award-winner Sean Hayes in *An*

Act of God, a 90-minute comedy where the Almighty and His devoted Angels answer some of the deepest questions that have plagued mankind since Creation. He's finally arrived to set the record straight...and He's not holding back!

MARK TAPER FORUM
10 FEBRUARY — 20 MARCH
THE MYSTERY OF LOVE & SEX

A minefield of intimacy and identity is set for one modern family when a generational gap between parents and their daughter is blown wide open—extending into race, ambiguous sexuality and faith.

KIRK DOUGLAS THEATRE
6 MARCH — 3 APRIL
*WOMEN LAUGHING ALONE
WITH SALAD*

WORLD PREMIERE What's on the menu for the three women in

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AN EVENING
WITH LILY
TOMLIN



Guy's life? A mélange of bawdy language in a gender-bending comedy that invites everyone to savor this complex recipe of desire and shame.

GEFFEN PLAYHOUSE
GeffenPlayhouse.com
 2 FEBRUARY — 13 MARCH
BARCELONA

With the backdrop of the beautifully unfinished La Sagrada Familia, this play examines tragedies and triumphs that have the power to build us up as well as tear us down.

LA STAGE ALLIANCE
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LOS ANGELES BALLET
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 20 & 27 FEBRUARY
DON QUIXOTE

WORLD PREMIERE LAB
 Artistic Directors Thordal Christensen and Colleen Neary transform Cervante's iconic novel into splendid visual tapestry of love, illusion, daring and adventure.

LOS ANGELES CHAMBER ORCHESTRA
LACO.org
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LOS ANGELES PHILHARMONIC
LAPhil.org
 23 JANUARY — 23 FEBRUARY
CITY OF LIGHT

The L.A. Philharmonic, Esa-Pekka Salonen, and other artists explore French masterworks such as Debussy's *Pelléas et Mélisande* and Ravel's *Mother Goose*, in new creative visual productions.

3 - 6 MARCH
DUDAMEL & MAHLER 3

Gustavo Dudamel leads the L.A. Philharmonic, Tamara Mumford, the women of the Los Angeles Master Chorale and the Los Angeles Children's Chorus in the Mahler's colossal Third Symphony.

LOS ANGELES OPERA
LAOpera.org
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Mozart's popular opera is reborn using projected hand-drawn

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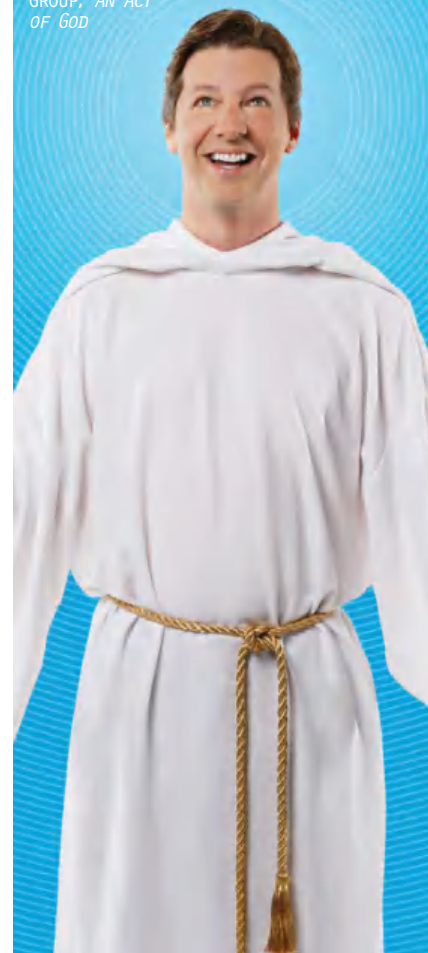
PASADENA PLAYHOUSE
PasadenaPlayhouse.org
 28 JANUARY — 21 FEBRUARY
FLY

Hope, endurance and accomplishment are the hallmarks of the first African-American Army Air Corp fighters—the famed Tuskegee Airmen—who flew over the skies of Europe and North Africa during World War II.

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CENTER THEATRE
 GROUP, *AN ACT
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LOS ANGELES BALLET, *DON QUIXOTE*



LOS ANGELES PHILHARMONIC, WALT DISNEY CONCERT HALL

TUSCAN TEMPTATIONS

ANDREW FRASER TASTES THE DELIGHTS OF ONE OF THE MOST BEAUTIFUL PLACES IN THE WORLD

*Villa I Giullari,
inset: the en-suite.*

The last 20 years have seen pretty much every place, from Bilbao to Basingstoke, pitching themselves as the new Tuscany. It's all the Emperor's new clothes. Tuscany is the new Tuscany and it's time to go back.

Beautiful, artistic, elegant – I stayed at the gorgeous Villa I Giullari, a five bedroom stately pile up in the hills above its capital Florence but still just a 20 minute walk from one of the world's most delectable cities. The villa is part of a beautifully restored farmhouse out in a small Tuscan hamlet. Set amidst rolling countryside, a break here offers the best of both city and countryside. There's an outside infinity pool, where you can gaze at the regal landscape and down on the city, a huge state-of-the-art kitchen, five en-suite bedrooms and a huge living area with high beamed ceilings. The owner of the property can even arrange feasts for you courtesy of a local chef – and Tuscany Now, which lets the property, can arrange you your own Tuscan cooking lessons courtesy of world-famous local chef Anna Bini. (tuscanynow.com/anna-your-chef-in-tuscany) If it's graceful scenery, incredible food and stupidly handsome men you are after then this is the place for you. And oh my! The food! Florence does one type of food, Tuscan – but blimey this stuff is good. I tasted the best ravioli of my life at the

aforementioned Anna Bini cooking school; little parcels, tender as a heart, stuffed with herby Tuscan sausage and presented in a lemon cream sauce doused with parmesan. Incredible! Florence abounds with Michelin starred eateries but you don't have to pay through the nose to feast like a king. My favourite place was Club del Gusto in Via dei Neri – the Tuscan equivalent of a builders' caff, where Italians with dirty boots and mucky overalls settled down to huge bowls of pasta prepared front of house by the owner taking centre stage. Washed down with a huge glass of glorious Italian red, a meal sets you back less than £5 a pop. On my first visit I inhaled a huge bowl of sausage, mushroom and tomato pasta – the next time fusilli covered with crushed walnuts, fresh made pesto and parmesan. Egg and chips this ain't.

My initial fear that there was no gay scene whatsoever was soon allayed, after a shout out for info on Grindr and a meeting with a lovely British man who drew me a gay map of the city. You don't need to go to a gay bar or club to meet other homosexuals, they're

everywhere, but if you do, the thoroughly charming Piccolo Cafe, tucked into a super cool area to the east of the city centre, behind Santa Croce, is a charming local where everybody finds themselves at some point in the night. It's a great place to hangout,

and for some reason Italians seem to have a thing for pasty English blokes. What else? Definitely save a day to wander the Uffizi Gallery, a treasure trove of Renaissance masterpieces. If you tire of the city, lazy days can be spent lounging by the pool, or go for a day trip to beautiful Siena just down the road. There is so much to see in Florence, you could spend every single day in a gallery or museum and not wear it out, but that's to miss the point. The best days involve chucking away the guide book and wandering the cobbled streets, coming across an endless world of surprises, delightful palazzos, beautiful speciality shops and amazing cafes serving to-die-for-food. Sure this is the home of Michelangelo, but Florence is, in itself, one of the world's most incredible works of art.

Tuscany Now (tuscanynow.com, 0207 684 8884) offers 7 nights in I Giullari Villa (Sleeps 6) from £326pp based on 6 people sharing on a self-catering basis in January.



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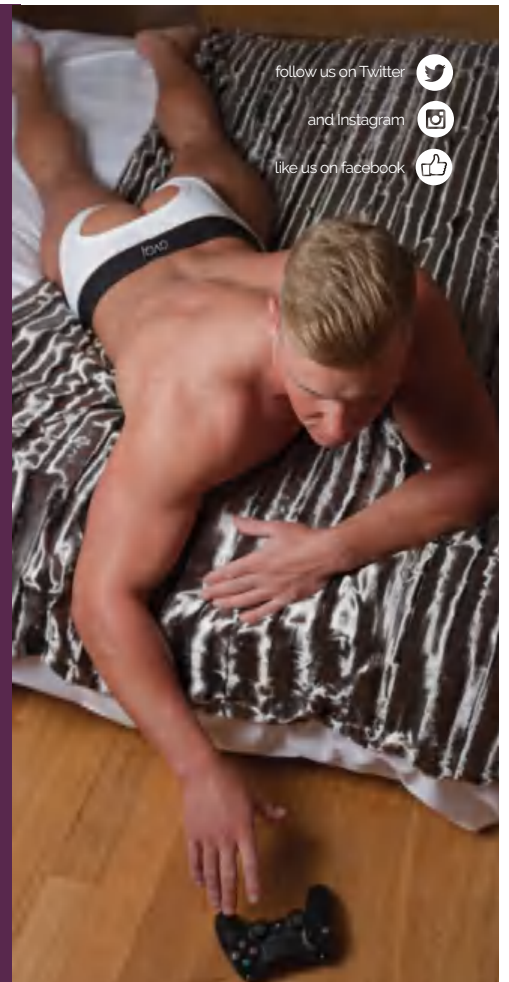
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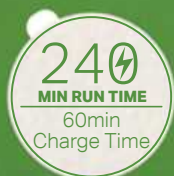


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Christmas

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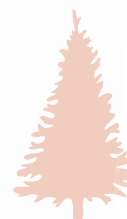
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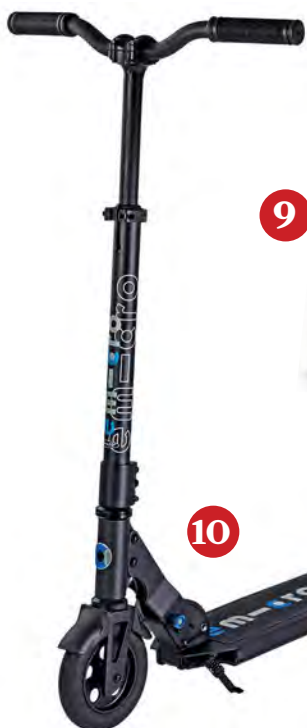


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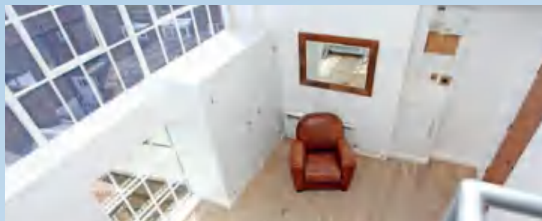
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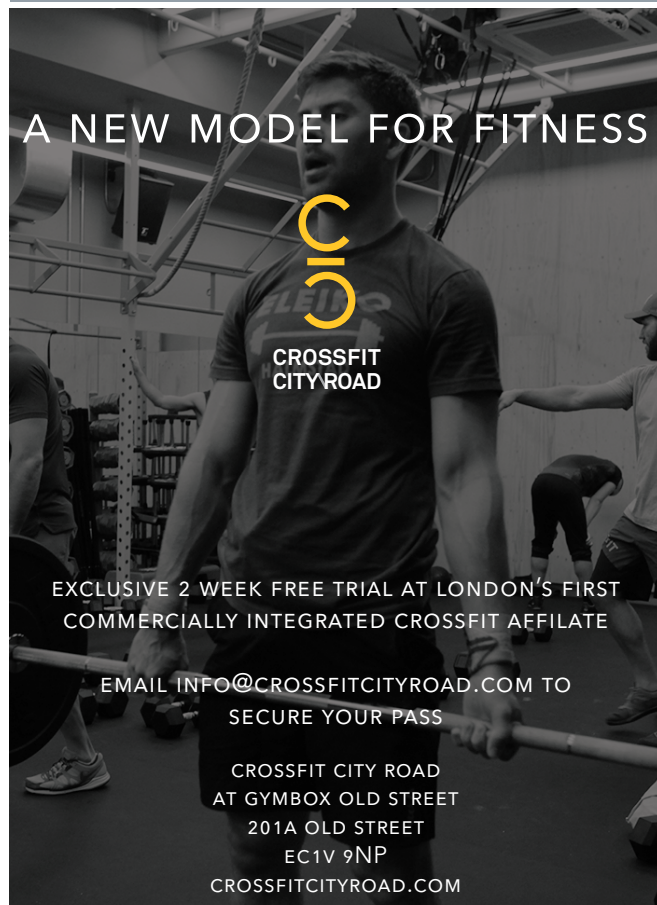


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HOW MUCH IS TOO MUCH FOR A HAIRCUT?

Anything over £25, I think. I obviously don't get colour and stuff, I just get a trim, so mine is always like £15 and I'll slip them an extra fiver like, because they've had to put up with me. They're always trying to give me the *TOWIE* flicks and quiffs and that but I just resist it.

2/5 JUST SAY NO!

WHO'S YOUR FAVOURITE BECKHAM AND WHY?

I would say Brooklyn. I heard he got a job in a cafe, and I thought that was really cool that such a wealthy, privileged kid got a job. Just going among the people, serving them coffee. I'd love to go and give him a really confusing name to have to write on the cup, and see what his breaking point is.

3/5 WE'RE GUESSING THE BREAKING POINT IS WHEN HE DISCOVERS WHAT YOU ACTUALLY GET PAID FOR SERVING COFFEE? #SEEYA

WOULD YOU RATHER RUN OUT OF UNDERWEAR OR MOISTURISER?

I would rather run out of moisturiser. Because I've never worn jeans without underwear and I imagine it would hurt. And I do a lot of jumping around on stage so yeah – there's an awful lot of chafe.

2/5 IT'S A TOUGH CHOICE BUT WE GUESS CHAFING IS NOT IDEAL.

HOW WOULD YOU VOTE IN A REFERENDUM ON THE UK LEAVING THE EUROVISION SONG CONTEST?

I would probably vote against that because I know how many people love it. I think

we're a little too modest, a little too low key, and you've got to be properly over the top and really go for it. Didn't Ireland have Jedward one year? That's the right idea. Or S Club 7! I wouldn't even put a singer in. I'd just get a team of eccentric synchronised dancers, put a backing track on and just have a massive dance.

5/5 ERR, SO BASICALLY JUST S CLUB 7 THEN. GOTCHA.

WHAT'S THE BETTER WEAPON: SIZE OR HUMOUR?

Humour without a doubt. It's got me by and I'm married now. She's really little as well, so it's kind of like being big. I like to pretend that she's 6 foot and I'm like 7 and a half.

4/5 WE'RE NOT SURE HE TOTALLY UNDERSTOOD THIS QUESTION. OR DID HE? ANYWAY, 7 AND A HALF WE'LL TAKE.

WHO WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE MAKE A CAMEO IN THE AB FAB MOVIE?

Somebody really obscure and weird that shouldn't be there at all – like Barack Obama. He can do anything. Or a really high level actor, so it would look like they've taken a soft job – Michael Fassbender doing a really shitty cameo.

3/5 IF THEY CAN'T GET FASSBENDER, CAN THEY AT LEAST GET HIS 7 AND A HALF? MUST HAVE ITS OWN AGENT...

DO YOU KNOW THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A BEAR AND A TWINK?

Well, I assume a bear is kind of a big, alpha male, masculine kind of man and a twink is

maybe a smaller more effeminate man?

3/5 AN EXCELLENT EDUCATED GUESS THERE SIR.

IF YOU HAD TO CREATE A SQUAD OF INSPIRATIONAL WOMEN TO BRING ON STAGE WITH YOU, A LA TAYLOR SWIFT, WHO WOULD IT INCLUDE?

I'd have Amy Schumer, Sarah Millican, Amy Poehler and Tina Fey. Also probably Uma Thurman from *Kill Bill*, just with a sword at the front in case anyone starts with me.

5/5 WHAT A FUCKING DREAM TEAM, SERIOUSLY. WHAT A WOMAN, TIMES FIVE.

IF YOU WERE TO TAKE US ON A DATE IN YOUR HOME TOWN OF SOUTH SHIELDS, WHAT WOULD WE DO?

We would go to my local, where me and my mates have always drunk. It's called The Beehive. It's not even a trendy hipster pub, it's like a real old man pub. There's a queue at eight in the morning of old people, waiting to get in, you know what I mean?

1/5 YEAH, WE'RE PROBABLY NOT GOING TO HAVE A SECOND DATE TBH...

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